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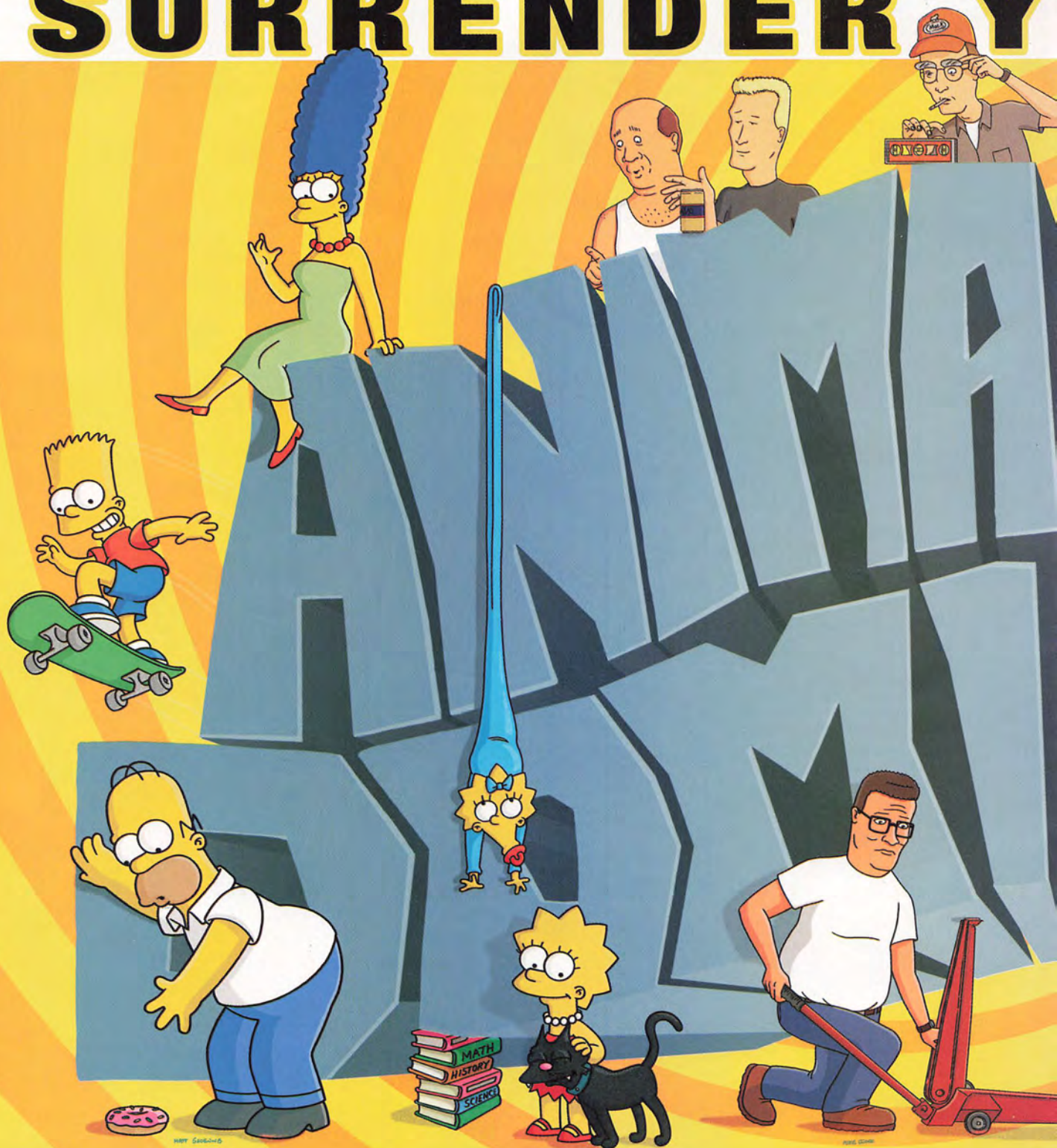
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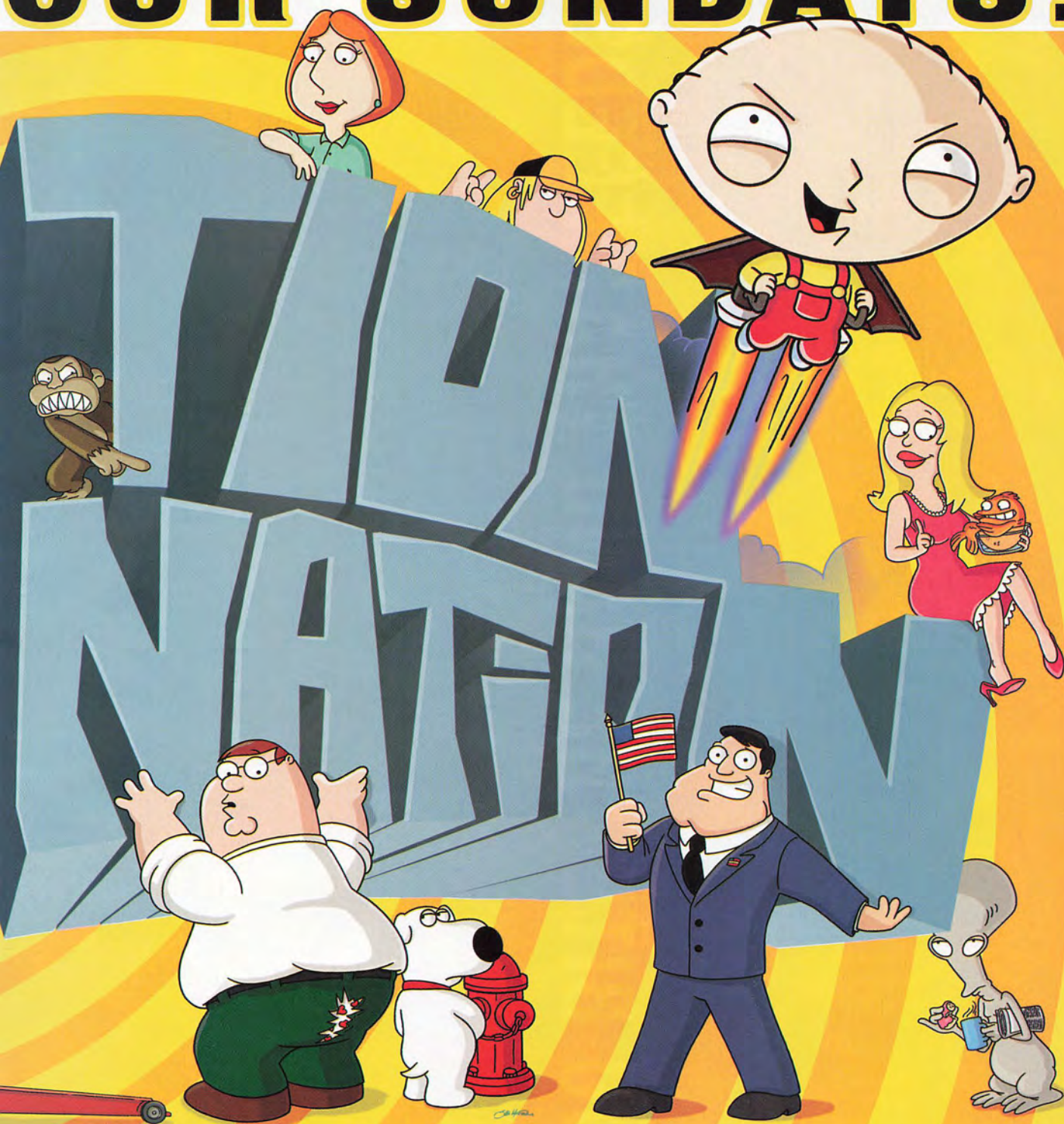
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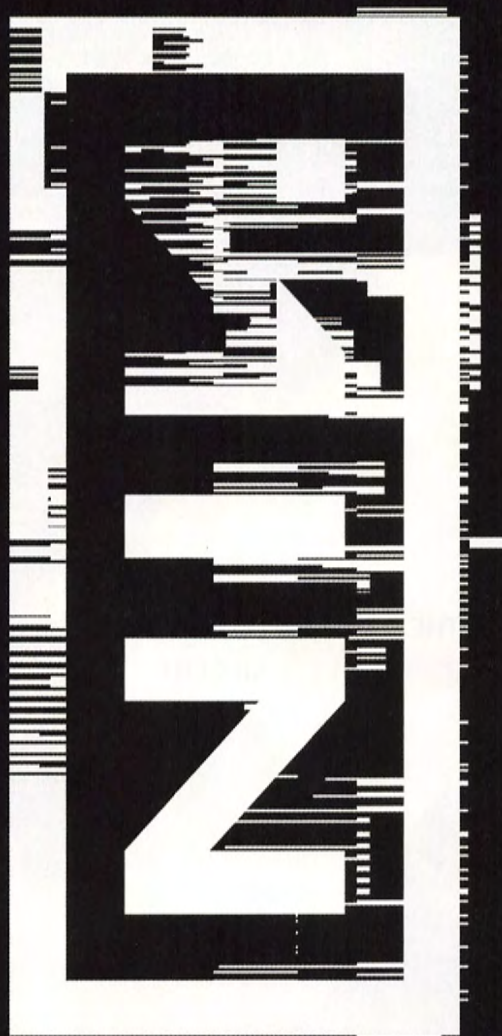
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[WITH_TEETH]

[05.03.05]

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BLENDER

MAY 2005

FEATURES

76 EMINEM & 50 CENT

One stays at home and plays with his kids. The other tours nonstop and plays with groupies. Hip-hop's odd couple grab some Taco Bell and tell all.

82 MERCHANDISE ME!

There are so many musician-endorsed products out there these days, you could practically live off them for a week. Actually, you *can* live off them for a week. How do we know? Because we told one of our guinea pigs, er, reporters to do just that.

88 CIARA

The prodigiously talented heir to Aaliyah's R&B throne doesn't drink, doesn't smoke and thinks fame is no big deal. Just don't ever ask her if she's nervous—seriously, don't.

94 COACHELLA: AN ORAL HISTORY

The annual indie-rock festival has become the must-see event for the nation's tragically hip. Read about how it got started (and how it almost didn't) in the words of the producers and artists who made it happen.

100 \$848: MOBY

Moby takes our money and uses it to pamper himself into oblivion. Along the way he discusses fame, debauchery and, oh yeah, making music.

104 THE REVENGE OF CRAZY NATE

The 2004 murder of ex-Pantera guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott by a mentally unbalanced fan was one of the darkest moments in rock history. Why did it happen?

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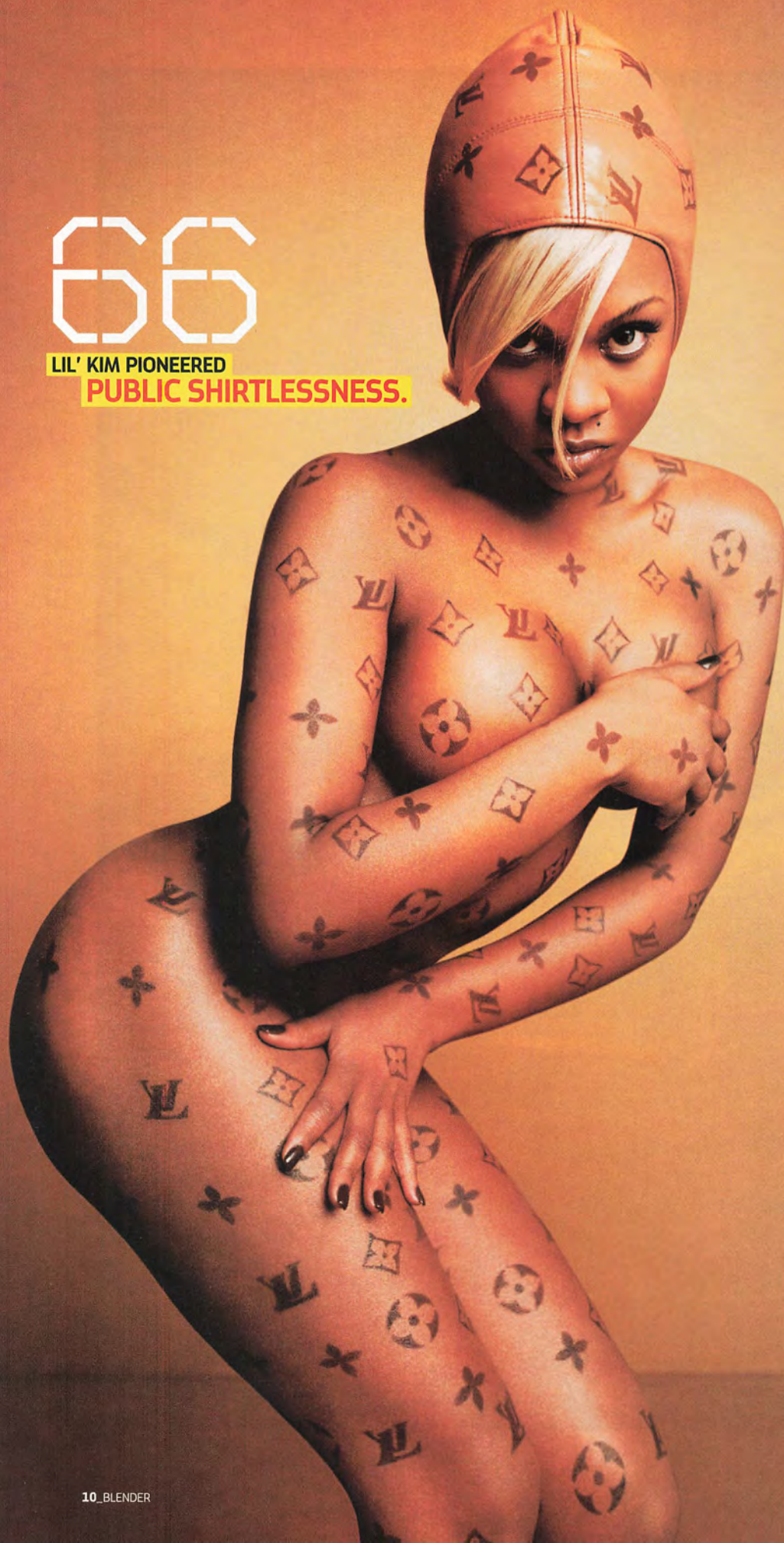
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MANSON THINK SHE IS?

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32 ALMOST FAMOUS

Bloc Party; Brendan Benson

INSIDER

56 DEAR SUPERSTAR: BECK

After a detour into heartfelt love songs, the king of the losers is back and ready to answer your piercing questions.

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SONGS EVER:
FLEETWOOD MAC,
"DREAMS"

In 1976, the members of Fleetwood Mac distilled all the anxiety of superstardom, heartbreak and drug abuse into four minutes of pop perfection.

64 ASK BLENDER

Alicia Keys on *Cosby*? Nick Drake jamming with the Stones? Sebastian Bach's father a famous artist? And the Cure, dissing one another in song?

66 SEX SCANDALS A-Z

The rock world is littered with deviant behavior. Read about the highlights in our encyclopedic guide to backstage naughtiness.

74 MY MUSIC:
KRISTIN CHENOWETH

The Broadway superstar calls herself a good Christian girl with a tortured soul. So what music does she rock out to when she's alone?

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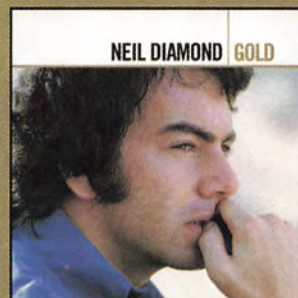


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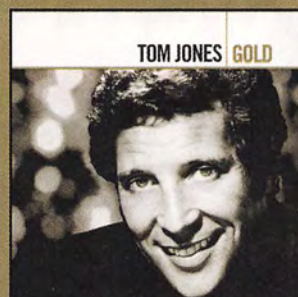
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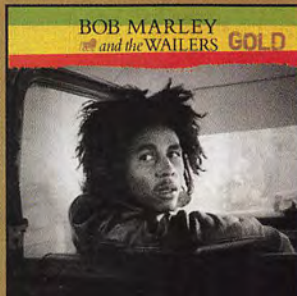
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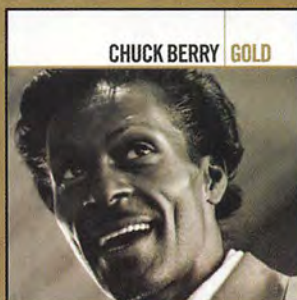
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"I WAS SHOCKED WHEN ODELAY WASN'T
A TOTAL DISASTER." **BECK**

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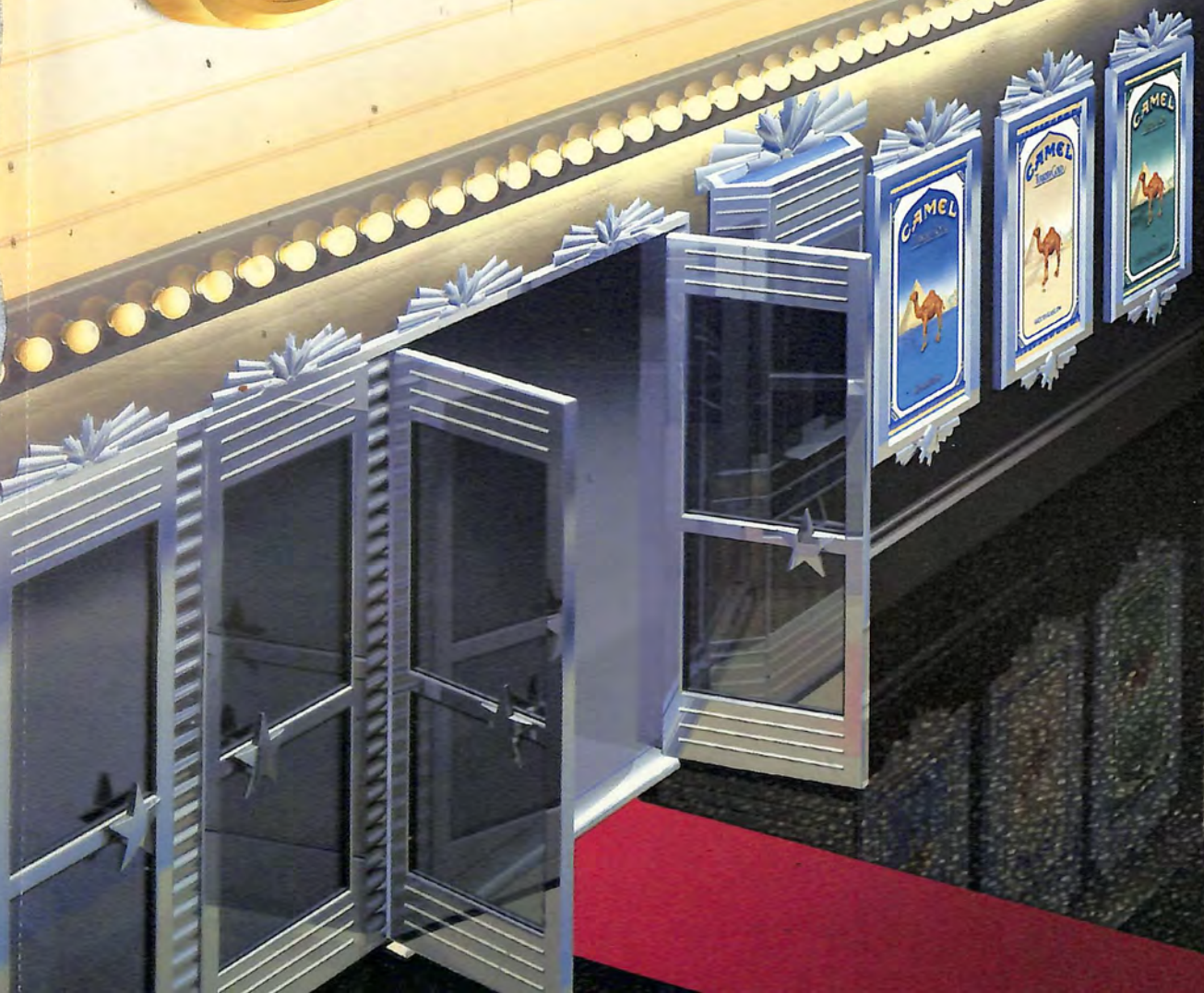
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2 oz. pineapple juice

2 oz. cranberry juice

Combine in a glass over ice.
Stir well.



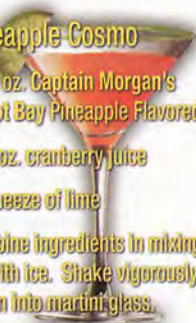
Pineapple Cosmo

1 1/2 oz. Captain Morgan's
Parrot Bay Pineapple Flavored Rum

1 1/2 oz. cranberry juice

1 squeeze of lime

Combine ingredients in mixing
tin with ice. Shake vigorously.
Strain into martini glass.



Mango Madras

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Parrot Bay Mango Flavored Rum

2 oz. cranberry juice

2 oz. orange juice

Shake over ice. Pour into glass.



Captain Morgan's
PARROT BAY

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END OF THE FANTASY

Thanks for the memorial to Traffic drummer Jim Capaldi, with the lyrics to "Dear Mr. Fantasy" on the spine of your April issue. While the lyric was a solemn reminder of the passing of a great drummer, the hot shots of J. Lo made it a little easier to bear.

MICHAEL POLLACK, AMBLER, IN

DIAMOND IS FOREVER

Thanks, *Blender*, for quoting one of my favorite songs with your back-page lyric in the April issue: "Good times never seemed so good" is the partial title of "Sweet Caroline" by the legendary Neil Diamond.

JESSICA HAYWOOD, SANTA ROSA, CA

RING OF DOOM

How could you forget the greatest car-crash song of them all? "Teen Angel" by Mark Dinning. The moral: Never return to a car that's stalled on railway tracks to retrieve your boyfriend's ring. Saddest lyric: "Just sweet 16 and now you're gone/They've taken you away/I'll never kiss your lips again/They buried you today."

RYAN MCFARLAND, POCATELLO, ID

CALLING GWYNETH

Loved the J. Lo piece. I still can't believe you got Marc Anthony to do the photographs. Who are you going to get to photograph Coldplay next time you do a feature on them? Gwyneth Paltrow?

CARL UNDERWOOD, DURHAM, NC

Coincidentally, Coldplay are on the cover next month. And we did ask about Gwyneth's availability to photograph the band but, apparently, she's booked to do Whitesnake for *Classic Rock*.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RANDY WALTON OF REYNOLDSBURG, OH, WINNER OF *BLENDER'S* APRIL CROSSWORD CONTEST, WHO SCORED A TREO 650.

LISTENUP

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Or: your2cents@blender.com.



Brooke Valentine causes a stir at Ikea.

HATING 'HATERATION'

Re: J. Lo's use of the word "hateration." Okay, so I know she's got her own perfume and clothing line. But when did she get her own dictionary?

ROBERT FENTRUCK, NEWPORT NEWS, VA

Last year. You didn't get the memo?

FIDDY MEETS MARTHA

Please, please, please, please may there be a camera crew nearby when 50 Cent "kicks it" with Martha Stewart.

BRADLEY PICKELL, SCHENECTADY, NY

FIDDY FIRST DATES

So, on a first date 50 Cent likes to "fuck and watch TV." Who says romance is dead?

TONY CHAMBERLAIN, DANBURY, CT

VALENTINE'S DAY

You made my day with your feature on Brooke Valentine. How can someone that beautiful be so scrappy? She certainly seems to live up to her "Girlfight" single. I also couldn't help thinking that her previous group, Best Kept Secret, was suitably named, given that I've never heard of them.

KELLY AHMAD, STAMFORD, CT

WHERE'S BOBBY BROWN?

How on earth did Pamela Anderson get to be No. 1 on your "Hottest Galpals" list? Especially as Bobbi Brown didn't make the list at all. Pamela Anderson isn't fit to lick Bobbi's feet—although I'd be more than happy to buy *that* video.

FRANKLIN SMITH, WORCESTER, MA →

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DISCOVERY



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A Clockwork Orange 2:
Armed and Fabulous.

GO JERSEY!

Following your My Chemical Romance feature, here are some other famous New Jersey-ites you somehow missed: Jon Bon Jovi, Jack Nicholson, Kirsten Dunst, Danny DeVito, Alecko Eskandarian, Meryl Streep, Carl Lewis, Lou Costello, Huey Lewis ...

JARED GROSSMAN, JONESBORO, AK

Stop! You had us at Alecko Eskandarian!

FEEB-LE

So the FBI is finally cracking down on Irv Gotti and the Murder Inc. crew. And it only took two years to put together a report on all the shenanigans they've been into. Why didn't they save themselves some time and listen to a few albums? It's not like they've been hiding their familiarity with criminal activity.

MARTIN JAMES, MONROE, LA

BLENDER BEAUTIFUL?

In your "25 Hottest Rock & Roll Galpals" feature, you slam Jada Pinkett Smith for being "only five feet tall" and describe Ric Ocasek as Paulina Porizkova's "Lurch-like paramour" and also "a gangly bespectacled nerd." I can only assume that, in order to feel superior enough to make such comments, the Blender staff are all perfect physical specimens who file their copy in between modeling haute couture and being photographed at fashion shoots.

ERICA SEWARD, HARRISBURG, PA

Don't hate us 'cause we're beautiful.

TERA'S TEARS

Was I the only reader who felt strangely moved at the idea of Tera Patrick getting teary over the death of *Law & Order's* Jerry Orbach?

CAITLIN CHANNING, TALLAHASSEE

Put it like this: You're the only one who wrote to tell us about it.

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REAL PORN

Has Tera Patrick really appeared in a movie called *Please! Cum Inside Me 2*? Or did you make that up?

ASHLEIGH WILLIAMS, BUCKEYE, KY

We couldn't make that up.

WATERING-CAN SEX!

I would just like to confirm Billy Idol's statement about every Englishman over 30 being kinky. A few years ago I had an English boyfriend who was well over 30 (don't ask). What I particularly remember about the relationship, although I've tried to black it out, is that after a few drinks he liked to ... [there follows a lengthy and unprintable story involving Scotch tape, a watering can and something called "black pudding."] And that's why, these days, I only date Americans. USA!

ANONYMOUS, PORTAGE, MT

TONED PORN

All I can say is thank heavens that Lil Jon is going to "set the tone" for the hardcore sex in his porn movie. I know when I'm watching a hardcore porn video it's totally ruined if the tone isn't right before the sex begins. P.S. I'm being sarcastic.

JONATHAN S., PHELAN, CA

You're so not invited to our private screening.

LENGTHY SENTENCE

I'd like to congratulate Ozzy Osbourne for saying Los Angeles is "a hip, slick, happening, Paris-Hilton-getting-fucked-up-the-arse kind of town." Not because I necessarily agree with his description of my hometown, but because it is surely the longest understandable sentence he has ever uttered.

EMILY PISCH, KALAMAZOO, MI

OUCH!

How convenient that Madonna should admit "I no longer have time to be creative" just as I should decide that I no longer have time to listen to any more Madonna CDs.

VANESSA POZAN, CAPE MAY, NJ

BEER FOR BREAKFAST!

When Warren Zevon called Billy Idol "one of the great songwriters," was that back when he used to drink a six-pack before breakfast and, indeed, for breakfast?

ATUL DAROOKA, MARBLEMOUNT, WA

LADIES' NIGHT

In your article "Dirrty," discussing Lil Jon's pornography, I'd like to thank him for not including "two-inch dicks in the movie." Something for the ladies!

ELIZABETH POWELL, BLUE BELL, PA

DEAD RINGER

Oh my god! I had to do a double-take when I saw your story on D'Angelo's arrest ("Dead Ringer"). Not only did I think ODB had risen from the dead, but that he'd gotten himself arrested again.

TALIA GREEN, GREENDALE, WI

CHEMICAL REACTION

As a fan of My Chemical Romance it was nice to see them covered in such an in-depth fashion. But I'm not sure that Gerard Way's opinion that journalists "usually portray us as a fucked-up, dark, vampire, alcoholic rock band" will be much changed by your story.

JAKE SCHWARTZ, HOLGATE, OH

ROLLING ALONG

For the first time ever, I've found reason to doubt your judgment. How could you leave out Anita Pallenberg in your "25 Hottest Rock & Roll Galpals?" Not only was she gorgeous but she dated three-fifths of one of the most talented bands ever, the Rolling Stones.

BILL JENICK, CORONA, CA

Phew. We thought for a second there you were going to say the Backstreet Boys.

WISDOM OF YOUTH

Loved reading your utterly hilarious "Rock's Worst Drivers" feature. And after reading it, I was unsurprised to see elsewhere in *Blender* a picture of Billy Joel walking on a beach with his 23-year-old wife. I guess she refused his offer to take her for a nice long drive.

OMAR LOPEZ, BELLE, MO



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ALL THE MUSIC. ALL THE NEWS. ALL THE TIME

BURNER

CELEB CHIHUAHUAS ★ GREEN DAY'S COMA BOY ★ MIKE TYSON SINGS

JESUS JUICE!



BRIAN "HEAD" WELCH OF **KORN** RENOUNCES
NÜ-METAL AND METH FOR THE LORD AND VOWS
TO SAVE 50 CENT

AFTER A DECADE of being worshipped by disenfranchised teens, Korn guitarist Brian "Head" Welch, 34, is leaving the band he helped found 13 years ago to follow a higher power, and has penned a personal song to rapper 50 Cent.

"I thought I had it all—money, fame, pretty women—but I came to a point where I didn't want to live," he told more than 10,000 members of the congregation at Valley Bible Fellowship in his hometown of Bakersfield, California, in February.

"Brian has found out that God's real, and he's stoked," Senior Pastor Ron Vietti interjected to thunderous applause.

"I am in love with this world," Welch told *Blender* from his Bakersfield home. "I've got my arms wide open. I'd die for anyone on this earth. I feel like there's a spotlight that's being shined upon me by God—it's like a dream come true!"

Following his standing-room-only appearance at the church, the rocker made a pilgrimage to Israel in late February, retracing the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Traveling by camel, Welch toured the Holy Land and was baptized in the Jordan river, where John the Baptist anointed Jesus.

Welch's spiritual awakening blossomed last fall after a business associate sent him a cryptic message. "I was making millions in real estate, and my broker woke up in the middle of the night and sent me an e-mail saying, 'Don't think I'm weird, Brian,

but God woke me up in the middle of the night to send you this verse.'"

The scriptural passage was Matthew 11:28—"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"—and it continued

to resonate with Welch throughout Korn's tour last November.

"After the shows, I'd go to the back of the bus and pray, 'God, would you please just kill me and put me out of my misery?' I would tell him, 'I'm rich and I'm miserable! I'm addicted to meth and rehab isn't working!' I think God was leading me towards wanting to die because He's the only one who could save me."

Upon his return to Bakersfield, Welch read the Bible and accompanied the evangelical broker to a church service at Valley Bible Fellowship. With his hood pulled over his head, the rocker sat in the front pew; by the end of the service, he came forward to announce his intention to



Pastor Ron Vietti, right, baptizes Welch in the Jordan river in Israel, March 5.



Welch no longer agreed with Korn's rock & roll lifestyle.

surrender to God.

"We're a nontraditional congregation, so having a rock star join our church is not a big shock-a-roni," Executive Pastor Jim Crews said. True to their relaxed approach to faith, the clergy have supported Welch's decision to tattoo MATTHEW 11:28 on his neck and J-E-S-U-S across his knuckles. "The letters are facing him; whenever he gets tempted and reaches for something



**"BRIAN HAS FOUND OUT THAT
GOD'S REAL, AND HE'S STOKED."**

Welch rides a camel to the Mt. of Olives, overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem.

bad, he'll be reminded of Jesus," said Crews.

The service at which Welch delivered his Christian "testimony" inspired 40 churchgoers to surrender their lives to God. In the days following Welch's speech, pastors say, 300 people have come forward and the church's Web site has received more than 1.5 million visitors.

"That Sunday morning was off the hook, man!" said Crews. "Twelve-year-old heavy metal kids and 40-year-old school principals were legitimately affected by what Brian was saying."

Welch now hopes a certain bullet-ridden rapper will heed his call. "I'm writing a song to 50 Cent that's like a letter from God," said Welch. "He says he loves God, but then he contradicts himself. The song's out of love so I'm not going to release it unless he starts talking trash about me." The song is a part of Welch's larger plan, through a forthcoming secular solo project, to "extend Korn's music to cover another emotion: happiness."

"We put celebrities on pedestals, so for someone like Brian to say, 'It's not there, man. It's chasing the wind,' is a huge

message," Crews said. "You almost wonder whether, if someone had e-mailed Kurt Cobain a verse, there'd have been another outcome in his life."

Korn, who have released seven albums and sold more than 13 million records in the U.S., will carry on without Welch. Despite the band's statement wishing their former bandmate well, Welch tells a different story. "Those guys no longer talk to me. Jonathan [Davis] won't return my calls. They're mad because I left Korn at a very important time for the band, but I had no choice." NOELLE HANCOCK



TA TA

Did **KID ROCK** clobber a Nashville strip-club DJ over the music selection?



FEBRUARY 15: After a perceived slight, Robert "Kid Rock" Ritchie allegedly punches a DJ at Christie's Cabaret, a strip club in Nashville, and flees the scene.



LATER THAT MORNING, Rock is arrested. "There was a squabble concerning—I guess—the selection of music," said Sgt. James Smith.



CHARGED WITH simple assault, the rapper is released on \$3,000 bail. "It was a beautiful night," Rock told reporters outside the station. **GABE SORIA**

NEWS ROUNDUP

Serial parole-breaker **MARION "SUGE" KNIGHT** has been arrested after police found marijuana inside his truck after he made an unsafe U-turn. The vehicle was also not insured.

MADONNA is to play Candy Darling, the infamous transvestite of Andy Warhol's Factory scene, in a new movie.

New York's punk birthplace, **CBGB**, is likely to close this summer if lease negotiations prove unsuccessful. A group of musicians is rumored to be setting up a rescue package for owner Hilly Kristal, who said, "I am determined to stay, but [the landlords] want me out."

WORD!



"I'm me."
BRITNEY SPEARS'S HUSBAND, KEVIN FEDERLINE, WHEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE HIMSELF

¿YO QUIERO A PIECE OF ME?



BRITNEY, HILARY AND PARIS ALL NOW OWN CHIHUAHUAS. BUT WHICH HAS THE BEST "DOGGYSTYLE"? FIND OUT BELOW.



	TINKERBELL	BIT BIT	CHIKUITA
OWNER	PARIS HILTON	BRITNEY SPEARS	HILARY DUFF
BREED	An "applehead" Chihuahua	A "teacup" Chihuahua	A "deer" Chihuahua
BEST FRIEND	Honey Child, Nicole Ritchie's Shih Tzu.	Lacy Loo and Lucky, Britney's Maltese puppies.	Josh Madden of Good Charlotte.
CAREER	Author (<i>The Tinkerbell Hilton Diaries</i>); Model for Guess.	Red-carpet eye candy.	Stay-at home dog.
CLAIM TO FAME	Name was the password to Paris's hacked sidekick.	Ordered a \$180 steak at Picasso restaurant in Las Vegas.	Once met Tori Spelling at an animal-rescue benefit.
FAVORITE OUTFIT	Pink Chanel suit.	Von Dutch hipster gear, see-through minis for summer.	Favors dark solids.
MOMMY LOVE	Forgetting Tink was at her grandma's house, Paris put up \$5K for her return.	Brit Brit created "Dog's Crib," a section of her Web site devoted to Bit Bit.	Hilary adopted Chiquita from LA's Much Love Animal Rescue Center.
NEMESIS	Paris's new pet Rottweiler.	Stray Cheetos.	Lindsay Lohan's new Maltese puppy.



JOHANNA PIAZZA



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Bloc Party, left to right: Russell Lissack, Gordon Moakes, Kele Okereke, Matt Tong.

"MICHAEL STIPE SEEMED TO QUITE LIKE US."

ALMOST FAMOUS

Bloc Party

FOUR FRIENDS OF FRANZ LIKE TO GET DRUNK AND DANCE—NAKED. OH!

BY JOSH EELLS

"MICHAEL STIPE SAW us play a show in Denmark," says Kele Okereke, singer for London dance-rock sensations Bloc Party. "He was with Helena Christensen. We met with him afterward—he seemed to quite like us."

Okereke—reclining in a sunlit apartment on New York City's Lower East Side—stutters at the mere mention of the famous names. A first-generation Brit whose parents emigrated from Nigeria before he was born, he's shy and soft-spoken, pausing often to examine his beat-up Converse sneakers. Drummer Matt Tong, slouched on the sofa next to him, is equally unassuming, peeking out from behind wire-rims and thick bangs. "Basically we're a complete bunch of losers," Tong deadpans.

If so, they're probably the hippest losers in the world right now. The quartet got its big

break last year, when Okereke e-mailed Franz Ferdinand frontman Alex Kapranos and asked to open for the Scottish hitmakers. "Before then, we'd been playing crap shows in London pubs," Tong says. But Kapranos agreed, and after wowing a party full of Britain's music-industry bigwigs, Bloc Party were soon touring with Interpol and the Killers. Earlier this year their debut entered the U.K. charts at No. 3.

And about their name: "It's bound to make some people think about politics, but it was more of a play on words. Like a hip-hop block party," Okereke says in his un-hip-hop British accent, "but spelled wrong—like rappers do."

Their geeky demeanor aside, though, the band aren't afraid to ruffle some feathers. Take the jittery single "Helicopter." While spiky guitars swirl in the background, Okereke

spits out harsh lyrics about a blue-jeans-wearing American who's "Just like his dad/ The same mistakes."

"Yeah, everyone thinks that's about Bush," says Okereke. But...? He grins and shrugs his shoulders. "Nope—no butts."

OUT NOW SILENT ALARM VICE

ALL ABOUT US!

OBSESSION:

I have 30 pairs of shoes, but I only wear two or three. (Singer Kele Okereke)

FAVORITE BOOK:

The Catcher in the Rye (Drummer Matt Tong)

WON'T TOUR WITHOUT:

A CD player. Not an iPod—a CD player. (Okereke)

TYPICAL NIGHT OF DEBAUCHERY:

Getting drunk and dancing. (Tong) Naked! (Okereke)



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Usher and Brightwell, 2005.



GLAMAZON!

USHER'S NEW GALPAL AND RED-CARPET ARM CANDY USED TO BE A BALLER

USHER'S NEW plus-one may strut the catwalk and star in Old Navy commercials, but in college she was a powerhouse on the UNLV Lady Rebels basketball team.

The six-foot-tall stunner, Eishia Brightwell, 27, who towered over the *Confessions* singer as his date to the Grammys, the Soul Train Awards and the Oscars this year, was one of the squad's best players, leading them to several Division 1 victories.

Usher met Brightwell in 2002 when she played P. Diddy's love interest in the video for their "I Need a Girl" duet. Meeting again last July at New York's Cipriani restaurant, the singer became smitten after the Indiana native allegedly rebuffed his early advances. At the time, he was still dating Naomi Campbell. Neither of the celebrities' representatives would confirm the romance. JOHANNA PIAZZA



Brightwell's 1998 UNLV Lady Rebels portrait.

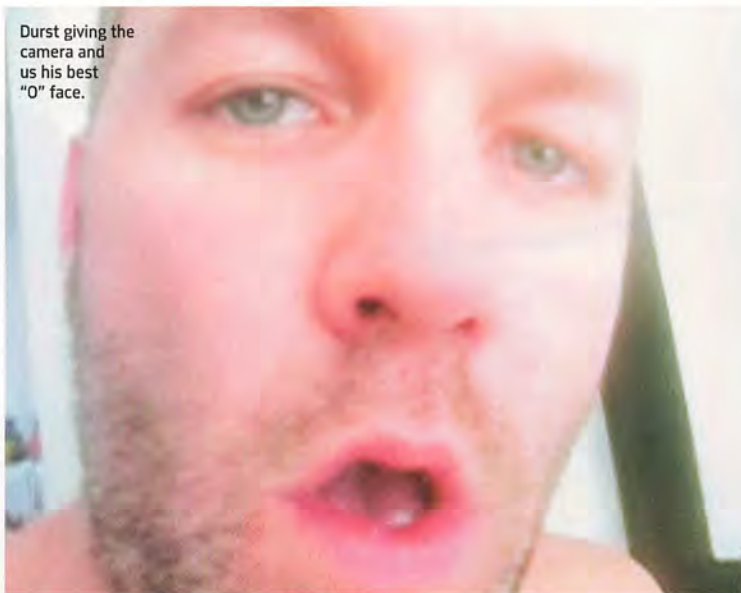
NEWS ROUNDUP

BLINK-182 have announced they are on "indefinite hiatus to spend time enjoying the fruits of their labors with loved ones."

PHIL SPECTOR's trial for murder is set to start on September 16.

BILLY JOEL has checked out of a Long Island hospital following extreme stomach cramps. His publicist said he had been suffering from "gastrointestinal tract distress with possible kidney stones."

Durst giving the camera and us his best "O" face.



Nookie!

Fred Durst films naked self boinking a lady. Eek!

THOUGH HIS LONG-RUMORED film-directing career has yet to pan out, limp bizkit's Fred Durst clearly harbors auteur dreams. A three-minute home video shot by Durst while having sex with an unidentified model/spray-tan enthusiast

made the rounds on the Internet after, as Durst claims, it was stolen from his home computer's hard drive by a repairman.

A statement issued by the rapper absolved hackers of any

responsibility. "Without hackers," said Durst, "we wouldn't solve the problems we need to solve, especially [homeland] security."

Though homemade porn tapes propelled the careers of Paris Hilton, Pam Anderson and Tommy Lee,

John D'Addario, editor of porn blog *Fleshbot*, is not optimistic. "As wankable material, it rates a zero. The girl is decent, but you have that gut and that unfortunate penis taking up the whole frame." STEVE KANDELL

"AS WANKABLE MATERIAL, IT RATES A ZERO."

WORD!



"Other men have Ferraris. My bliss is giving and sharing simple innocent fun."

MICHAEL JACKSON

SMILE!

BRIAN WILSON MEETS THE CAST OF BEACH BOYS BROADWAY BOMB

BRIAN WILSON PAID a surprise backstage visit to the cast of the Broadway show *Good Vibrations*, giving them a much-needed pick-me-up. The \$7.7 million production, which features 32 of Wilson's Beach Boys songs, opened in February to scathing reviews. On the bright side, the *New York Times* said it "sacrifices itself to make all other Broadway musicals look good." STEVE KANDELL



Wilson: "You crazy kids, you."



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USEFUL TIPS FROM THE STARS

HOW TO ...

BECOME A TABLOID STAR

No one knows trashy gossip rags like the Brits, so let up-and-coming U.K. dance-rockers **Kasabian** show you the way to scandal-sheet infamy.

BY STEVE KANDELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

1

SHOW 'EM YER NUTS

CHRISTOPHER KARLOFF, GUITARIST: "Two things tabloids love are public nudity and displays of mental illness, so guarantee some ink by tackling both at once. Get your picture taken in Central Park, lying naked while pigeons eat chips off you. Much more effective than getting caught smoking crack."

2

GET INTO TROUBLE

SERGIO PIZZORNO, LEAD GUITARIST: "Nothing makes headlines like messing with the law, so do it with style. Get caught with a ton of gold bullion in the trunk of your SUV. If you want to seem eccentric, tell them you're making bullion sandwiches. For good measure, have a copy of Da Vinci's *Last Supper* in the trunk."

3

DATE PARIS HILTON

TOM MEIGHAN, LEAD SINGER: "Sometimes all you need to do to make news is have dinner with someone more notorious than you. Take Paris to Burger King—that's front-page news right there. If you're not known, this creates buzz—people will wonder who you are and what the hell you're doing with her."

4

SHAG A DOLPHIN

CHRIS EDWARDS, BASSIST: "One thing that'll absolutely get you in the tabloids is getting caught having sex with a dolphin. Pick her up at Sea World, then take her out for a few beers. Take a few incriminating Polaroids and leak them. Don't worry—it's strictly a one-night thing. Next-morning calls are optional."

KASABIAN'S ALBUM
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(Left to right):
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Sergio Pizzorno,
Tom Meighan,
Chris Edwards.

Hylan Blvd.

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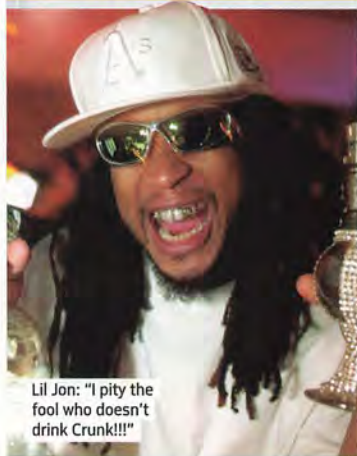
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WHEN WILL YOUR FAVORITE POP STAR CRACK?



Lil Jon: "I pity the fool who doesn't drink Crunk!!!"

#18 LIL JON

CURRENT AGE **33**

DEATH CALCULATOR STARTS AT AGE **79**

CATEGORY YEARS ADDED/SUBTRACTED

African-American male (minorities have shorter life expectancy) **-6**

Mega-drinker: If kidnapped, his pic gets posted on tequila bottles **-6**

Media frenzy issues: singer or salesman? Soul man or sellout? **-1**

"King of Crunk" (creative people have lower risk of Alzheimer's disease) **+4**

Drinks Crunk!!! energy drink (caffeine can lead to heart attack and stroke) **-6**

Hitched to longtime ladyfriend (married couples live longer) **+5**

Age-phobic; claims he's 30 (fears true age will be revealed) **-2**

Gold teeth (can promote oral bacteria, which can lead to heart disease) **-1**

Serial sunglasses-wearer (may increase accidents) **-2**

Works closely with porn stars (high-risk behavior) **-9**

This "public" rapper keeps middle-class values under wraps (anxiety weakens immune system) **-1**

Nocturnal lifestyle—in studio until 4 A.M. (sleep deprivation) **-1**

ESTIMATED LIFE EXPECTANCY **53**

PROJECTED YEAR OF DEATH **2024**

GERONTOLOGIST DR. DEMKO SAYS: Lil Jon appears to be in denial, with multiple identity issues. His schizophrenic, secretive lifestyle might be cutting his life short.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Thieves have stolen more jewelry from the **OSBOURNES**. An alleged \$380,000 of goodies, including two watches, was recently taken from Jack's suitcase at Los Angeles's LAX airport.

Canadian-born **ALANIS MORISSETTE** has become a U.S. citizen after passing a citizenship test and reciting the pledge of allegiance in L.A.'s Convention Center. She later performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the House of Blues.

In Bristol, England, a train has been named after Clash singer **JOE STRUMMER**, who died in 2002.

WORD!



"People tell me I paved the way for Eminem."
WHITE CANADIAN MC SNOW

Green Day were in Japan when Corey woke up.



Coma boy Corey George (left); Blender reported on Eminem's 2001 coma cure.

Saved!

First Eminem, now Green Day wake a coma kid

IT'S A MEDICAL MIRACLE, courtesy of America's biggest punk band.

The music of Green Day has awakened a boy in Britain from a coma. Nine-year-old Corey George had been unconscious and on life support for two weeks when his mother played the punk trio's Grammy-winning *American Idiot* in his hospital room. Within an hour, he opened his eyes and wiggled his fingers and toes. Four days later, George was moved out of intensive care.

"He isn't talking yet," said the boy's grandmother, Janet George. "But he's off the critical list."

George suffered severe head trauma after he was struck by a car in his hometown of Aberaman, South Wales. The accident occurred on his ninth birthday, as he was walking to a local store with his birthday money.

"He loves Green Day," said George's father, Martyn, 35, who bought the CD for his son's birthday. "The title track is his favorite."

Green Day were on tour in Japan when George made his recovery, but they sent him a get-well package. "The boys are incredibly pleased that one of their tracks has brought Corey out of his coma," said a representative. "They hope he makes a full return to health."

In December 2001, *Blender* reported on another incident of music arousing a comatose child. After being hit by a car, 12-year-old Dion Armstrong of Cramlington, England, slipped into an 11-day coma. But when her parents played Eminem's *The Marshall Mathers LP* for her, she suddenly awakened. **JOSH EELLS**

"GREEN DAY ARE PLEASED THAT AMERICAN IDIOT BROUGHT COREY OUT OF HIS COMA."

EMINEM REVIVES COMA GIRL

The misbegotten rapper's music revives a 12-year-old fan back to life.

COMATOSE: MARSHALL MATHERS (Eminem) has helped bring a comatose 12-year-old back from the brink of death.

Corey Armstrong, a 12-year-old boy, slipped into an 11-day coma after being hit by a car. His parents played Eminem's *The Marshall Mathers LP* for her, and she suddenly awakened.

Corey's mother, Dion, says she was told by a doctor that her son would never wake up. But when she played Eminem's music, he started to move.

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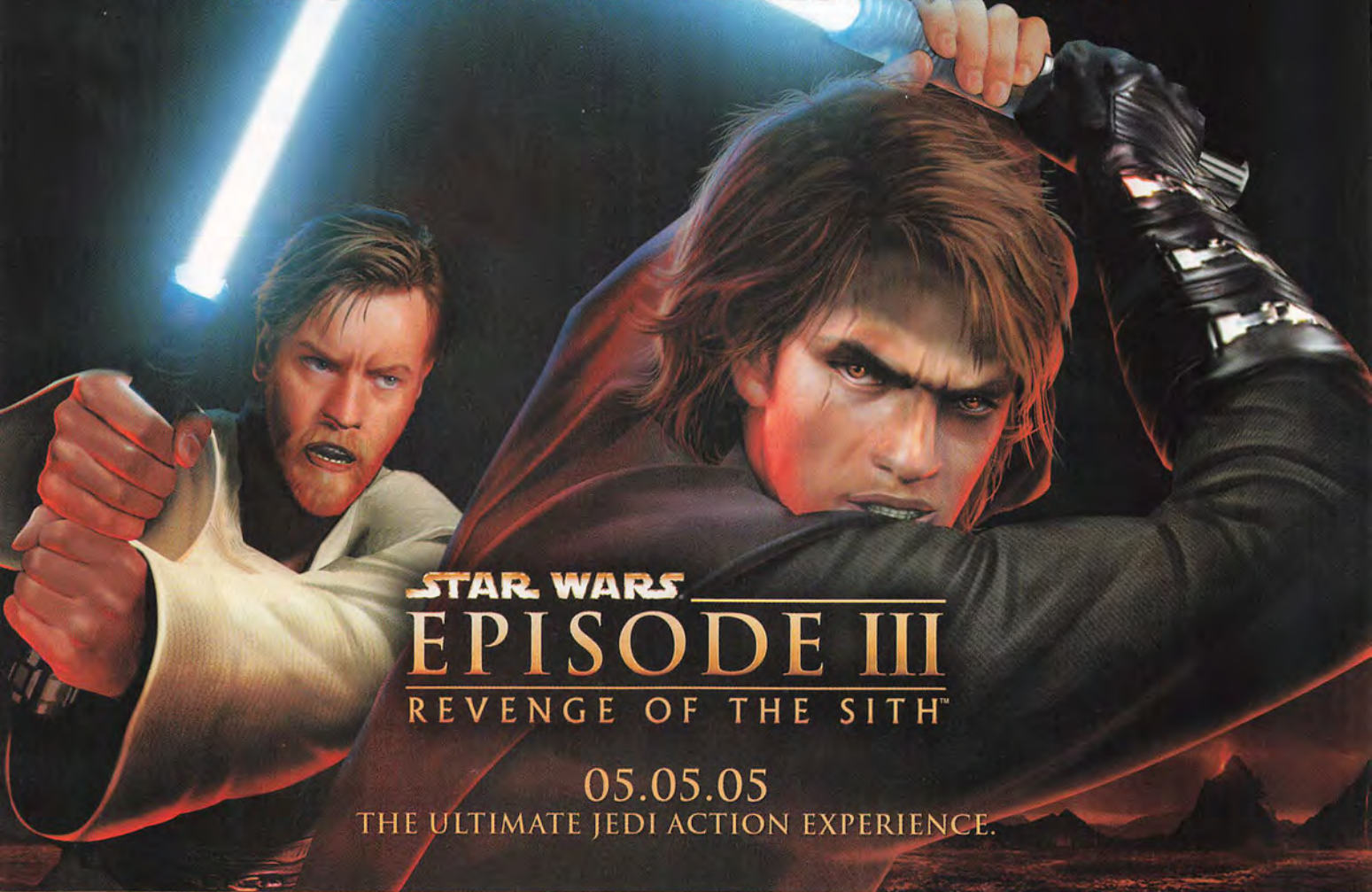
Corey's mother, Dion, says she was told by a doctor that her son would never wake up. But when she played Eminem's music, he started to move.



MOUNTED WEAPONS

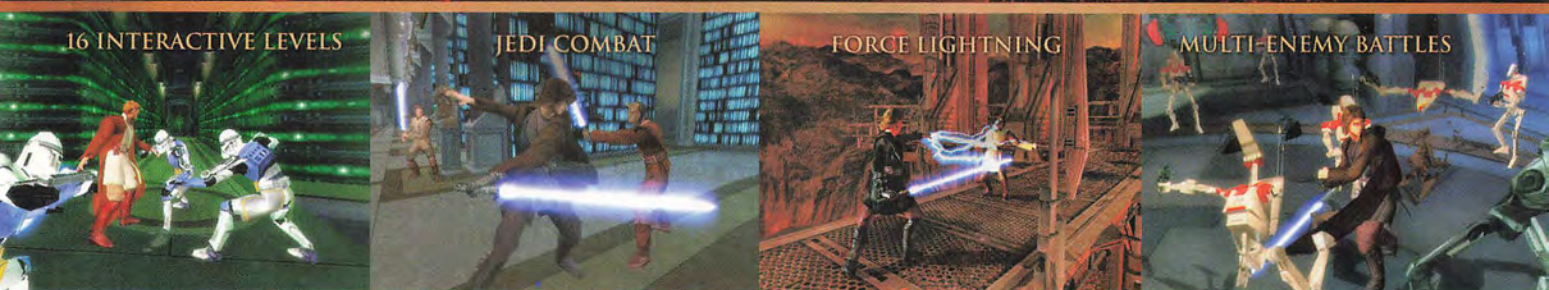
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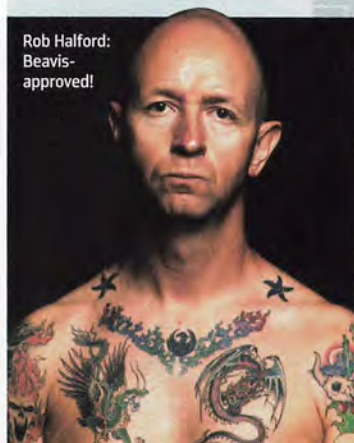


PlayStation.2



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Rob Halford:
Beavis-
approved!

DO YOU ROCK?

ROB HALFORD

DOES THE JUDAS PRIEST SINGER AND MAN-LOVING HEAVY METAL GOD INDEED ... ROCK?

Ever trash a hotel room?

Judas Priest has left a trail of destruction all around the planet. I prefer to call it "redecorating."

Ever had a gambling fixation?

I've just been elevated to Platinum in my Harrah's casino membership.

Best rumor about yourself?

That I'm straight.

Ever had a brush with the law?

Drinking and driving in my Corvette. You meet some wonderful people in a jail cell on a Saturday night.

Worst rock & roll injury?

The last Priest show in Toronto, I got knocked off my bike onstage and was knocked out. I had whiplash and broke my nose.

Biggest celeb on speed dial?

My mom.

Ever get lucky on an airplane?

I joined the mile-high club in a loo on a 747 from London to New York.

Stupidest thing you've ever eaten?

I've had some strange things in my mouth.

Most expensive item of clothing?

Some of my stage outfits by Agatha [Blois] are 20 grand a pop.

Most decadent thing you ever did?

I once had breakfast in Brussels, lunch in Paris and dinner in Vienna.

DAVE HILL

VERDICT

HIS MOM ON SPEED DIAL? INTRACONTINENTAL DINING? ROB HALFORD IS TAKING IT TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL!

→ JUDAS PRIEST'S NEW ALBUM, *ANGEL OF RETRIBUTION* (EPIC), IS OUT NOW.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Bright Eyes leader **CONOR OBERST** launched into a diatribe against Texas onstage at Fort Worth in February, claiming he would put a gun to his head before living in the state. "If you came to this show tonight, you're not a normal Texan," he said. "If you were a normal Texan, you'd probably be roping steers and raping Indians."

BONO has revealed that the music he would like played at his funeral includes **BOB DYLAN**'s "Death Is Not the End" and Verdi's *La Traviata*, as sung by **PAVAROTTI**.



"THINGING THONGS ITH THUPER!"

BRAVO!

MIKE TYSON MAKES HIS SINGING DEBUT IN ITALY

HE'S WON THE world heavyweight championship and been convicted of rape—now Mike Tyson can add singing to his dossier. The 39-year-old boxer recently performed at the annual music festival in San Remo, Italy, despite protests from women's groups. "I'm a father, an uncle, a person who loves animals," Tyson said shortly after performing the Italian standard "Volare" and a rap version of "New York, New York." "It's not fair to see me just as a fighter."

BLENDER'S BURNING QUESTION

WHAT WILL BE THE OUTCOME OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S CHILD-MOLESTATION TRIAL?



A MISTRIAL!

High powered lawyers find a loophole, or undependable jurors leak stories to the tabs.

B SUPER GUILTY!

Jackson receives maximum sentence of 21 years.

C KINDA GUILTY!

Wacko did indeed kiddie-fiddle, but gets a kindly, Martha-lite sentence.

D O.J.!

Cleared of all wrongdoing, Jackson celebrates with a new CD and a new llama.

SURVEY SAYS



READER WISDOM

"MISTRIAL! SOMEHOW, HE WILL WALK AWAY. WHY DIDN'T HE JUST DO IT WITH MINI-ME?"

BOBBY MARKS, CHICAGO

Log on to Blender.com for June's "BURNING QUESTION."

One deserving reader will have his or her comment published in the next issue and win this **SIEMENS CT66** cellphone plus 375 minutes from Cingular.



WORD!



"To be a pimp, to live like a pimp."

SNOOP DOGG, ON HIS CHILDHOOD DREAMS

DO PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE STRANGE??? DO YOU??? FEELING LIKE THERE IS JUST NO LOVE??? IS THIS THE END OF THE WORLD??? CAN ANY PHILOSOPHY PRESERVE US FROM SUCH IMPALING FACTS??? WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY??? WHO FARTED??? WHY DID THEY DO IT??? WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING??? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR ROUTINE WHEN IT ALL COMES DOWN ON US AT ONCE??? DON'T YOU FEEL RESPONSIBLE??? WILL YOU STILL BE SANE ENOUGH TO LAUGH??? HAVE YOU BEEN GETTING ANY LATELY??? HOW ARE YOU??? BY WHAT MEANS WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO DIE??? WHAT'S THE DEAL HERE??? JUST WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF??? DO YOU SOMETIMES LOOK BACK AT YOURSELF 3 OR 4 YEARS AGO AND THINK, "GOD, WHAT A JERK???" DO YOU HEAR VOICES MUTTERING IN YOUR HEAD, FAINT AND INDISTINCT??? DO YOU USE CREDIT CARDS IRRESPONSIBLY IN HOPES OF LATER PAYMENT??? DO YOU GET MESSAGES FROM SPACE BEAMED INTO YOUR SKULL??? DO YOU ENJOY FILING, STACKING, RE-SORTING THEM??? WOULD YOU LOVE TO GO LOOTING DURING A RIOT??? DO YOU WORRY ABOUT YOUR BRAIN??? DO YOU DREAM OF CONTROLLING THE WORLD??? WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, DID YOU TORTURE SMALL ANIMALS AND BUGS??? DO YOU FIND IT UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPREHEND THE OPPOSITE SEX??? DOES YOUR TEMPER STAY DORMANT MOST OF THE TIME, ONLY TO SUDDENLY EXPLODE INTO QUASI-INSANE RAGE??? DO YOU WONDER WHEN THE MUSIC DIED??? DO YOU TAKE LIFE LYING DOWN??? DO YOU LIKE TO DRIVE FAST AS HELL, WITH YOUR CAR STEREO CRANKED UP ALL THE WAY??? DO YOU OFTEN 'TUNE OUT' THE WORLD WHILE CONCENTRATING??? DO YOU FEEL YOU "MARCH TO THE BEAT OF A DRUNKEN DRUMMER???" DO YOU FORGET WHERE YOU JUST PUT THINGS??? DO YOU CATCH YOURSELF SHOOTING OFF AT THE MOUTH??? DO YOU SOMETIMES WANT TO FIRE A DEER RIFLE INTO YOUR TV??? DO YOU OFTEN LIE WHEN THE TRUTH WOULD SUFFICE??? DO YOU BLURT OUT WELL-MEANT BUT UNCOUTH STATEMENTS AND THEN IMMEDIATELY REGRET IT??? DO YOU SOMETIMES SMASH THE BEJESUS OUT OF YOUR FINGER WHEN USING A HAMMER??? DO YOU HAVE SPELLS DURING WHICH YOU ARE PISSED OFF OR DEPRESSED FOR WHAT YOU LATER DECIDE WAS NO GOOD REASON??? DO YOU COMMONLY HEAR RANDOM NOISES AND MISTAKE THEM FOR MUSIC??? WOULD YOU REALLY RATHER SIT AROUND AND WATCH TV THAN GO OUT??? ARE YOU FAIRLY WELL-ASSURED THAT YOU'RE SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE GAZOOBA??? DO YOU GET FIXATED ON ONE AMUSING LITTLE ACTIVITY AND THEN "GO AT IT" DAY AND NIGHT??? ARE YOU SCIENTIFIC RATHER THAN SUPERSTITIOUS??? WHEN YOU GET IMPATIENT WITH AN INANIMATE OBJECT, DO YOU TEAR IT TO SHREDS??? DO CERTAIN TEXTURES OR NOISES MAKE YOUR SKIN CRAWL??? DO YOU OFTEN STAY UP ALL NIGHT??? DOES MONEY "BURN A HOLE IN YOUR POCKET"??? DOES EVERYTHING SEEM A LITTLE UNREAL TO YOU??? DO YOU HAVE CERTAIN SECRETS THAT NO ONE ELSE KNOWS??? HAVE YOU EVER HAD A PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE??? SEEN A UFO??? DO YOU LET JOBS STACK UP, RATIONALIZING THAT YOU WORK BETTER UNDER PRESSURE??? DOES DISORDER IN YOUR WORK AREA DRIVE YOU NUTS??? DO YOU SPOUT BROAD GENERALIZATIONS ON SUBJECTS ABOUT WHICH YOU KNOW LITTLE OR NOTHING??? DO YOU FIND HUMAN FOLLY AMUSING??? DO YOU LIVE IN YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD??? DO YOU LIKE TO GO OUT AT NIGHT WITH FRIENDS, BEING ROWDY AND DISTURBING THE PEACE??? DO YOU ALWAYS NEED TO FART DURING THE MOST SOLEMN OCCASIONS??? DO YOU GET ALL HOPPED UP ON GOOF BALLS AND MAKE ELABORATE PLANS THAT WILL NEVER COME OFF IN A MILLION YEARS??? WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE IN PAIN OR DISCOMFORT DO YOU LAUGH, OR WANT TO??? DO YOU LIKE YOUR JOB/SCHOOL/CHORES??? DO YOU COMPULSIVELY READ ANY INANE THING (LABELS, ADS) THAT HAPPENS TO BE WITHIN VISION??? DO YOU SOMETIMES GET THE IMPRESSION THAT EVERYBODY IS OUT TO GET YOU??? DO PEOPLE CONSIDER YOU ODD??? DO YOU HAVE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES ACCORDING TO WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO??? DO YOU SOMETIMES MAKE FACES, SING, TWITCH, ETC. FOR NO SANE REASON??? WOULD YOU JUST AS SOON LET OTHERS MAKE THE TEDIOUS DECISIONS??? DO YOU BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY WITH FAMILY THAN WITH FRIENDS??? DOES EVERYTHING ALWAYS TAKE TWICE AS LONG AND COST TWICE AS MUCH AS YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD??? ARE YOU ALWAYS LATE??? DO YOU EASILY "BLOW THINGS OFF AND PROCRASTINATE"??? IS TODAY'S YOUTH MORE SCREWED UP THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS??? DO YOU IGNORE YOUR HEALTH FOR LONG PERIODS??? DO YOU SOMETIMES GET ALL "SPACED OUT" AND "DINGY" FOR NO APPARENT REASON??? DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL PARANOIA ABOUT PEOPLE WATCHING YOU AND LAUGHING AT YOU??? DO YOU EVER DREAM YOU ARE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND YOU SUDDENLY NOTICE YOU ARE WEARING NO PANTS??? DO YOU FIND THE CORPORATE BLEND OF AUDIO AND VISUAL PLEASURE ANNOYING??? DOES YOUR T.V. FAIL TO "PUT OUT"??? DO YOU SOMETIMES GO OUT BEATING UP STRANGERS??? DO YOU OCCASIONALLY SHOPLIFT "IN REVENGE"??? ARE YOU MORE OR LESS CHEERFUL AROUND OTHERS??? DO YOU SOMETIMES THINK YOU SHOULD "QUIT"??? DO YOU OR DID YOU DO LOUSY THINGS TO YOUR ELDERS, JUST TO BUG THEM??? DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOBIAS, FEARS, COMPULSIONS??? DO YOU SOMETIMES DWELL MORBIDLY ON THINGS LIKE SICKNESS, WORLD PROBLEMS, DEATH, DRUGS, PAIN, PERVERSION??? ARE YOU EVEN SLIGHTLY SICK IN THE HEAD??? DO YOU SOMETIMES FRET IRRATIONALLY OVER FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES??? HAVE YOU LOST PRETTY MUCH ALL FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT??? DO YOU BITE INTO AN APPLE AND THEN WORRY ABOUT THE WEIRD, CHEMICAL TASTE ON THE SKIN??? DO YOU USE OUR NATION'S PRESIDENT AS A SCAPEGOAT??? DO YOU THINK JUSTICE CAN BE BOUGHT??? DO YOU INSTINCTIVELY FEEL THAT ALL PUBLIC FIGURES ARE LIARS??? DO YOU GET A MINI HEART ATTACK EVERY TIME YOU SEE A COP??? DO YOU AUTOMATICALLY DISLIKE MEMBERS OF STRANGE RELIGIOUS CULTS??? WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK, WOULD YOU JUST AS SOON WATCH SOME CHEAP, STUPID ENTERTAINMENT OR MORE EDUCATIONAL FARE??? DOES IT IRRITATE THE HELL OUT OF YOU TO SEE WRITERS USE CLICHES??? DO YOU FALL MADLY IN LOVE, ALL THE TIME??? IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" THEN THIS JUST MAY BE YOUR MUSIC CHANNEL.

Reprogram

Fuse. A new era in music television.

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ALMOST FAMOUS

Brendan Benson

JACK WHITE'S XANAX-LOVING BUDDY GETS HIS CLOSE-UP. AGAIN.

BY JOSH EELLS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTY BUSH

MOST MUSICIANS GO their whole careers without being dubbed the next big thing. For 30-year-old singer-songwriter Brendan Benson, it's already happened twice.

"I dropped out of high school when I was 18," the genial Detroit native recounts over lunch at a crowded Manhattan coffee shop. "I wanted to move to L.A. and be a star." He laughs. "Well, I moved to L.A., at least."

He didn't become a household name, but Benson did spark a major-label bidding war with his self-produced demos. "People were promising me the world," he recalls wistfully, his flat Midwestern accent softening a bit. But when sales of his 1996 debut, *One Mississippi*, tanked, he was summarily dropped.

"I couldn't believe it," he sighs, shaking his head as if still not convinced. "It was a huge disappointment. I was devastated."

Depressed and broke, Benson moved back to Detroit. "I waited tables at this place called the Traffic Jam," he says with a smile. "No one tipped, and I'd be in the back screwing around, or spilling things on people."

Eventually one of his homemade tapes landed in the hands of hip Brooklyn indie label StarTime International, home of the Walkmen. Released in 2002, *Lapalco* became a surprise minor hit.

Now, with fickle industry eyes focused on him yet again, Benson is feeling prolific. He's finished two new records. One is a still-untitled collaboration with his friend and fellow Motowner Jack White to come out later this year. The other is *The Alternative to Love*, an effervescent rush of Beatles-esque pop, on yet another major label.

"Yeah," Benson laughs. "That's probably a big mistake."

OUT NOW THE ALTERNATIVE TO LOVE v2

ALL ABOUT ME!

FAVORITE BOOK

The Poor Mouth by Flann O'Brien

FAVORITE SONG

"30 Days in the Hole" by Humble Pie

OBSESSION

Vacuuming—it's so satisfying.

WON'T TOUR WITHOUT

Xanax

TYPICAL NIGHT OF DEBAUCHERY

Playing Scrabble and drinking wine.

"I WANTED TO MOVE TO
L.A. AND BE A STAR."

It was back in the Golden Age when Joannes Nolet settled in Schiedam, an old trading town in western Holland. It was there he first tasted success, literally. His 1691 set-up of a Distillery marked the beginning of a special family business that endures three centuries later. Today, the tenth generation of Nolets share the secret of the successful art of distilling, including recipes and techniques that are discreetly and respectfully passed from father to son.

Generations

Joannes Nolet taught the art of distilling to his son Jacobus who passed this special knowledge on to the next generation.

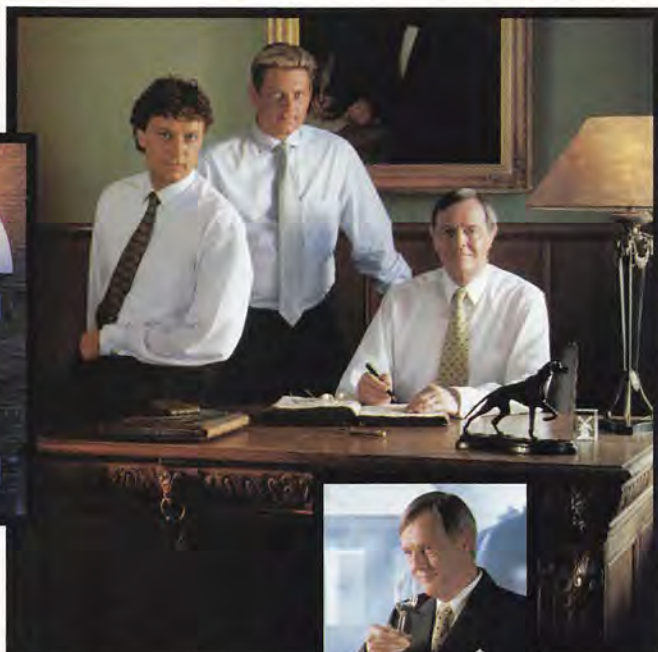
The Nolet Family and Ketel One

And as the Nolet family's history and renown grew and matured, so did the company. Although the Distillery kept up with technical developments, the Nolets never betrayed their traditional methods. As an export product, Nolet's distilled spirits soon found their way to the farthest corners of the Earth. In 1902 Joannes Nolet built a distillery in Baltimore, Maryland. But despite early success the new American distillery was forced to shut its doors with the famous prohibition of alcohol sales in 1919. Two generations later in 1992, Carolus Nolet, Sr. again expanded direction to the United States adding an operation in California. But manufacturing continued only in the history-ridden air and soil of Schiedam where the roots of Dutch distilling run deep.

Craftsmanship

More than three centuries ago the image of the Distillery was

dominated by horse-and-carts loaded with cargo, and boats moored at the waterside waiting to ship the bottles overseas. Impressive windmills graced the city and caught all the air they could to mill the grains needed for the pot stills. Today much modern technology has



been called in, but the Nolet but the Nolet Distillery remains loyal to its traditional approach, always distilling its ultra-premium vodka in copper pot stills, or ketels. Centuries later, the shining coal-fired copper ketel #1, after which the popular Ketel One Vodka is named, still stands here at this historic spot in Schiedam and remains in operation. Before bottling the traditionally distilled Ketel One Vodka, a member of the Nolet family must taste each batch to approve it for release to vodka connoisseurs worldwide. Only then, is it worthy to bear the name, Ketel One. Three centuries of heritage are evident in every glass of Ketel One Vodka; you can smell it, you can see it, feel it, taste it. The makers back in Schiedam can even hear that Ketel One Vodka meets



Distilling three hundred years of tradition

the most demanding standards. The gentle clink of glasses assures the Nolets they are maintaining their commitment to excellence. It tells them that Ketel One Vodka reaches all the senses. It tells them that notwithstanding their position or responsibility, they somehow share the secret of Ketel One Vodka.

Call 800.243.3618 for a copy of our award-winning Generations film
www.KetelOne.com



AIIGHT!

BALANCING PHOTO SHOOTS AND CLOTHES-DESIGNING HASN'T SPOILED **KEVIN FEDERLINE'S** QUALITY "ME" TIME.



FEBRUARY 16, Kentwood, LA: After buying videogames, Mr. Britney Spears picks up a snack and the couple's refreshment of choice, Coke.



FEBRUARY 25, Kentwood, LA: In Britney's hometown for two weeks, he multitasks laughing and walking.



MARCH 4, Santa Monica, CA: In between errands, he finds time to buy cigarettes and throw gang signs.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Mötley Crüe bassist **NIKKI SIXX** has won a legal victory against Vans sneakers for using his image without permission to promote its Tony Trujillo sneaker line.

GEORGE MICHAEL has declared he is retiring from music following a new film about his life. "I thought I should explain myself before I disappear," he said.

GERI HALLIWELL has said that she wants to learn to love herself before settling down with a life partner. "I'm trying to have a relationship with myself first," she said.

WORD!



"My album was shit."

KELLY OSBOURNE, WHO HAS ANOTHER ONE COMING OUT IN JUNE

WEIRD BAND ALERT



"How's it hanging?"
"Ruff!"



"What music do you play?"
"Rawwwwk!"

ALL CRITTER SPECIAL

CANINUS vs. HATEBEAK

It's fur vs. feathers, woofs vs. squawks, with one band whose singers are two **PIT BULLS** and another whose front-animal is a **PARROT**. Blender sorts out the beastly details with human members Sudz Exodus of Caninus and MRK of Hatebeak.



WHO?

New York-based grindcore band fronted by pit bulls Budgie, 5, and Basil, 4. The human lineup is guitarists Belle Molotov, 23, and Sudz Exodus, 26, and bassist Buddy Bronson, 26.



Baltimore-based death-metal band with a gray Congo African parrot named Waldo, 10, on the mic. His non-avian helpers are guitarist MRK, 28, and bassist BLK, 29.

WHY NOT A HOMO SAPIENS SINGER?

"Bands talk about being hard and being extreme, but they've got grown men trying to growl like animals. We give you the real thing."

"A band needs a vocalist with a lot of energy, and Waldo knows how to get people's attention."

BUT CAN THE BEASTS EMOTE?

"Pit bulls have a lot of frustration to work out from being demonized by the media."

"Waldo pours his goddamned soul into his work with his evil squawks. He can also mimic a ringing phone."

WHAT DO THEY THINK OF THE BACKING MUSIC?

"The dogs bark once if they like it and twice if they hate it. The bitches are prima donnas—if they don't like the riffs, they won't sing."

"Nothing makes it onto the record without his approval."

WHAT'S A STANDARD RECORDING SESSION LIKE?

"A lot of rawhide and pig's ears."

"The bird goes apeshit when the mic is hooked up."

ANY GIGS COMING UP?

"Things are in the works—we've had lots of offers from all over the world."

"Not unless we can find some hearing protection for Waldo. He doesn't respond well to heckling, either." **STEVE LOWE**

The new Jetta.
It's all grown up.

Sort of.



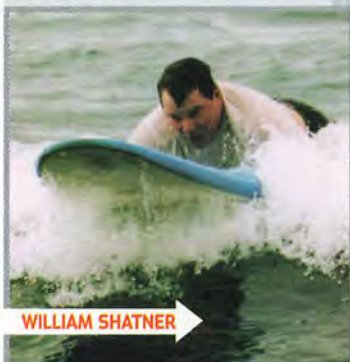
newjetta.com Drivers wanted.



POP STAR MUST HAVE

SURFBOARDS!

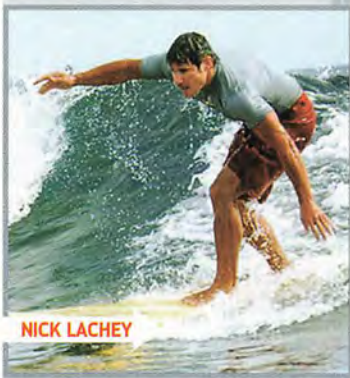
CONQUERING NATURE'S POWER IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF MACHISMO



WILLIAM SHATNER



JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE



NICK LACHEY



CHRIS MARTIN

NEWS ROUNDUP

Random House Inc. has sued **P. DIDDY** following the non-arrival of his memoirs, for which he received a \$300,000 advance more than six years ago.

Playgirl has offered **KANYE WEST** the opportunity to appear on their cover and inside the magazine naked. The rapper has not yet responded to the offer.

BRITNEY SPEARS has thanked Madonna for introducing her to Kabbalah, claiming the religion helped her through a difficult period in her life. "Through Kabbalah, I was able to look within myself, clear all the negative energy and turn my life around," she said.

WORD!



"She can't sing, write or play an instrument to save her life."

DAVID CROSBY, ON BRITNEY SPEARS

Eric Jackson and D'angelo Holmes, of the nonidentical Ying Yang Twins.



IN THE STUDIO

"We're Not Imbeciles!"

THE YING YANG TWINS' new CD goes beyond strip-club anthems ... sorta

"PEOPLE LOOK AT us like all our CDs are strictly about strip clubs," says Kaine, one half of crunk's reigning princes, the Ying Yang Twins. "We're serious now—we're not total imbeciles!"

Speaking to *Blender* from a tour bus rolling through California, Kaine, his partner D-Roc and their long-time producer Beat-In-Azz (real names Eric Jackson, D'angelo Holmes and Michael Grooms, respectively) are putting the finishing touches on *U.S.A. (United State of Atlanta)*, their follow-up to 2003's million-selling *Me and My Brother*. Last year they helped Britney Spears further devalue her innocence by producing the steamy single "I Got That Boom Boom."

"Strip clubs represent who we are and the streets where we came

from," explains Kaine, "but we don't want to be looked at like the new-school 2Live Crew anymore." The "Salt Shaker" hitmakers, both 26, want to move beyond potty-mouth antics. But not too far, apparently.

Their first single, "Wait (The Whispering Song)" repeats the line "wait until you see my dick, bitch!" in a smokey hush. "People are so captured by our voices, they neglect to hear what we're rapping about," Kaine says. "Whispering makes you listen." Other tracks include "Live Again," which honors women "who no longer want to be in the strip club," and the far more self-explanatory "I Hate Ho's."

U.S.A. is a tribute, Kaine says, to their hometown, featuring friends Lil Jon, Three-Six Mafia and Pitbull. "Instead of being all club bangers, this is gonna grab your heart, rattle your brain and open your eyes."

STEVE KANDELL

ALL ABOUT OUR ALBUM

ARTIST
Ying Yang Twins
STUDIO
The Zone, Atlanta
PRODUCED BY
Beat-In-Azz
LAST RECORD
Me and My Brother, 2003
NEW RECORD
U.S.A. (United State of Atlanta), 2005

ALSO IN THE STUDIO

G-Unit crew member **TONY YAYO** is recording his solo debut, *Thoughts of a Predicate Felon*, at the G-Unit studios in New York.

Indie rockers **MY MORNING JACKET** are working on their fourth album in upstate New York with producer John Leckie.

Neo-prog quartet **COHEED AND CAMBRIA** are recording their third album, *Good Apollo, I'm Burning Star IV*, in Woodstock, N.Y.

English dance duo **GOLDFRAPP** are in Bath, England, recording the follow-up to 2003's *Black Cherry*.

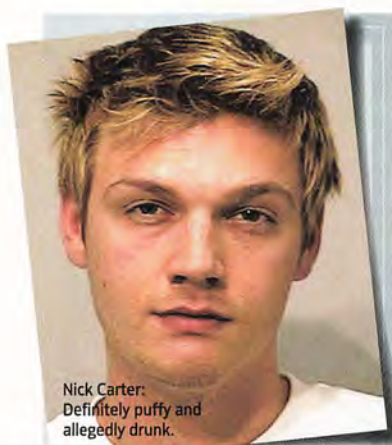
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IN THE CITY

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Nick Carter:
Definitely puffy and
allegedly drunk.

SAUCED!

NICK CARTER DRINKS, DRIVES,
GETS ARRESTED

JUST WEEKS BEFORE the scheduled Backstreet Boys reunion tour, the band's youngest member, Nick Carter, was arrested in Huntington Beach, California, for driving while intoxicated.

After failing a sobriety test, Carter, 25, was issued a citation and thrown into Huntington Beach City Jail for four hours on March 5. "He is on doctor-prescribed medication, and was unaware of its interaction possibilities," said the pop star's publicist. The bust came less than a month after Carter was forced to change his phone number in the fallout of ex-girlfriend Paris Hilton's infamous T-Mobile Sidekick hacking.

Both Carter and his younger brother Aaron are possible defense witnesses in the Michael Jackson child-molestation trial.

NOEL BODDIE

TELL US A JOKE



AVRIL LAVIGNE

"A SALESMAN KNOCKS on the front door of this house and its opened by a 3-year-old who's smoking a cigar and holding a bottle of Jack in one hand and a porno in the other. 'Say, little boy,' the salesman asks, 'are your parents home?' And the kid goes, 'What the fuck do you think?'"

NEWS ROUNDUP

Yusuf Islam, the Muslim man formerly known as singer-songwriter **CAT STEVENS**, has been awarded "substantial damages" after two British newspapers linked him to terrorism following his expulsion from the U.S.

In the program notes for his new U.S. tour, **BOB DYLAN** has attacked "amateur" young bands: "They don't know where the music comes from. I wouldn't even think about playing music if I was born in these times ... I'd probably turn to something like mathematics."



LIFE AFTER ROCK



Guess which
Rubette won the
Elton John
lookalike contest.

JOHN RICHARDSON OF THE RUBETTES

THEN

DRUMMER, THE RUBETTES
1973 TO 1979

"RUBETTES SINGER ALAN Williams and I were working on an album of rock pastiches, and the session singers didn't show up. So Alan and I ended up singing! When our glam rock song 'Sugar Baby Love' hit the U.K. Top 50 in 1974, we weren't an official group, so we hastily put one together.

"Selling eight million copies of our first single—and having a run of 16 hits—was a great experience. I'd recommend it to anyone. But I hit the booze big time. We'd fly every-

where first class, plied with champagne. After a couple of years I was disgusted with myself and had a religious awakening. I was reading the Bible on the road, and it made me think deeper, but I didn't fully connect. I studied anatomy and physiology and qualified as a remedial masseur and reflexologist. Without sounding too cliché, I left pop music to 'do good.'

NOW

HARE KRISHNA HEALER
ESSEX, ENGLAND

"One day my neighbor, an Indian man, read to me about Ram, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu, the energy of preservation, and I was totally carried away. I got to know the Hare Krishnas, and with chanting, I gave up booze, smoking and meat-eating. For the past 15 years my wife and I have been celibate, and we're very happy.

"Now I make healing music for the New World Music label. It

doesn't make a fortune but it keeps me in touch with people. It's mainly mantras and mus-

ic to achieve a higher reality.

"I also have a clinic where I have developed a sound bed that can help people reach an altered state of consciousness. I created it with Nick Coler, a programmer from [house music duo] the KLF, and it's based on the chakra system. It's been extremely successful for dealing with people's hang-ups, fears and pains." AS TOLD TO GAVIN MARTIN

WORD!



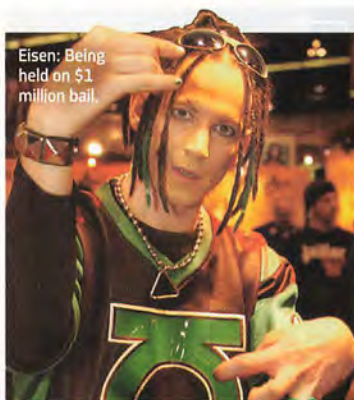
"They are
ho's."

CHER, ON
BRITNEY SPEARS
AND JENNIFER
LOPEZ

OCCUPANCY
BY MORE THAN
5 PERSONS
IS DANGEROUS
AND UNLAWFUL
PUBLIC ASSEMBLY LICENSE NO.
7-067-2
COMMISSIONER, DEPT. OF HOUSING

How Dirty Boys Get Clean.
NEW AXE SHOWER GEL





Eisen: Being held on \$1 million bail.

BUSTED!

STATIC-X ROCKER ACCUSED OF LURING GIRLS INTO HIS CAR

TRIPP EISEN, GUITARIST for California-based nü-metal band Static-X, was arrested twice in two weeks for allegedly engaging in sexual relations with minors.

On February 10, Orange County, California, police found Eisen, 39, sleeping in a car with an underage girl with whom, authorities say, he had just had sex. Eisen (real name Tod Salvador) was charged with one felony count of crimes against children.

Fourteen days later, New Jersey police arrested Eisen for allegedly sexually assaulting and kidnapping a 14-year-old girl he had met online at Find a Free Community Project. In his profile, he listed himself as a Republican with a lean body type and a Ph.D. While authorities confiscated his computers in search of more victims, Eisen's bail was set at \$1 million. If convicted, Eisen could face more than 30 years in jail. *SUZANNE ELY*

OBITS

KEITH KNUDSEN
56, February 7, in Kentfield, California, of pneumonia. Half of the Doobie Brothers' double-drummer attack. Knudsen joined the Doobies in the midst of their 1974 hit-making, playing on radio staples "Taking It to the Streets" and "Black Water."

HUNTER S. THOMPSON
67, February 20, in Woody Creek, Colorado, of suicide. Self-styled gonzo journalist who brought a drug-addled and caustic rock & roll attitude to political reporting and social criticism. The 1998 film adaptation of his 1972 book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* starred Johnny Depp.

EDWARD PATTEN
65, February 25, in Livonia, Michigan, of a stroke. Singer for the Motown Records vocal combo Gladys Knight & the Pips. Patten, a cousin of Knight's, sang tenor in the group, which was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996.



Anna Nicole:
"Clothes suck!"

Ozzy: "Feels about right!"

Inappropriate!

Rampant boob-related madness at the Australian MTV Awards

WHILE AMERICAN AWARDS shows languish in a state of post-Janet prudishness, the inaugural MTV Australia Video Music Awards show in March was chock-full of hooter-related mayhem.

Before the show, Ozzy Osbourne—who hosted the event with family members Sharon, Jack and Kelly—proudly clutched his daughter's left breast during a press conference.

The fatherly mammary grab was

discreet compared with the eyeful provided by a seemingly woozy Anna Nicole Smith. After presenting the Best Video award to former Silverchair singer Daniel Johns, the TrimSpa spokesmodel pulled down her dress to bare her double-D's covered with MTV decals, and then proceeded to straddle Johns.

Broadcast live in Australia, the often lewd show appeared on 42 MTV networks around the world, not including America. *STEVE KANDELL*

POP HISTORY

JULY 2006: THE SURREAL LIFE GOES INDIE-ROCK!



The "all indie rock" version of VH1's *The Surreal Life* started well, with Jack White and Franz Ferdinand's Alex Kapranos fighting over sleeping arrangements.



Before long, another argument erupted, between Frank Black and Pete Doherty from the Libertines.

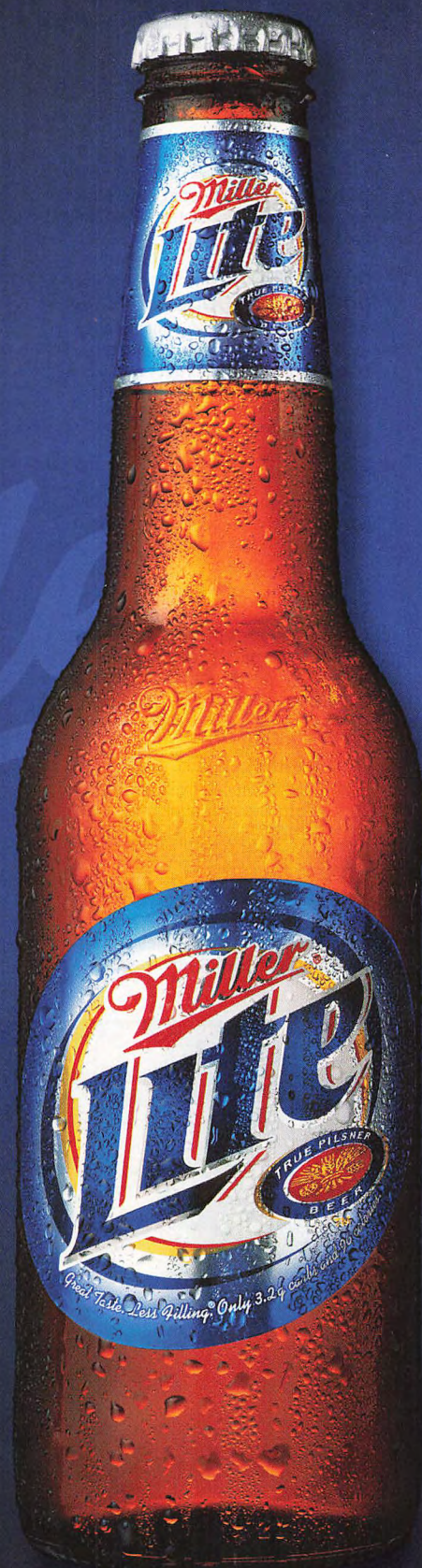


But while the season had its fair share of feuds, there was also some romance.

WRITTEN BY CLARK COLLIS ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN JAY

**GREAT TASTE.
LESS FILLING.
HALF THE CARBS OF BUD LIGHT.**

**BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER
THE CARB CRAZE.**



Great Taste. Less Filling.



Good call.



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20

SONGS YOU SHOULD

DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH

1 50 CENT
"SKI MASK WAY" SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
 A soul-inflected throwback to Curtis Jackson's hungrier—and harder—mix-tape days.

2 HOT HOT HEAT
"GOODNIGHT GOODNIGHT" WARNER BROS.
 Apparently, these Canuck fancy boys have driven a lot of ladies crazy; here, Steve Bays gets into one's head as she kicks his drunk ass out.

3 MIKE JONES
FEAT. SLIM THUG AND PAUL WALL
"STILL TIPPIN'" SWISHHOUSE/ASYLUM
 From Houston's Robitussin dens, a sizzurp-slow ode to getting your Impala to pop two wheelies.

4 YING YANG TWINS
"WAIT" TVT
 Crunk's loudest duo turn it down low, snapping their fingers and whispering some gross, gross penis brags.

5 BE YOUR OWN PET
"DAMN DAMN LEASH" XL
 Girl-fronted Nashville youngsters get their power punk on.

6 REGINA SPEKTOR
"ODE TO DIVORCE" SIRE
 If you're holding your breath for the next Fiona Apple album, check out the Strokes and Pink's favorite piano-playing smartass.

7 GORILLAZ
"FIRE COMING OUT OF A MONKEY'S HEAD" VIRGIN
 Damon Albarn and his animated supergroup tell a cracked children's story over a bassline you could Humpty Dance to.

8 KATHLEEN EDWARDS
"BACK TO ME" ZOE/ROUNDER
 Hard-rocking country about standing by your man—and making him drool over you.

9 NEW ORDER
"KRAFTY" WARNER BROS.
 A catchy plea for love and/or redemption from the Killers' synth-rock papas.

10 THE DAN BAND
"TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART" SIDEDUMMYY
 A profanity-laced, *Old School*-endorsed cover of this wedding-DJ standby.

11 CRYSTAL SKULLS
"HUSSY" SUICIDE SQUEEZE
 A fractured story about long-distance relationships, sex and spousal abuse, over fractured guitar riffs.

12 WEEZER
"WE ARE ALL ON DRUGS" GEFFEN
 Rivers is back with a fistful of power chords and, apparently, some pills, dust and blow.

13 SLEATER-KINNEY
"THE WOODS" SUB POP
 Monster guitar riffs churn like rusting industrial machinery while Corin Tucker shrieks about furry creatures.

14 MOUNTAIN GOATS
"THIS YEAR" 4AD
 A prolific indie-rock bard from California delivers lyrics of exhilaration and hope in an articulate bleat.

15 M.I.A.
"BINGO" XL
 Digital scuzz and Jamaican steel drums propel another highlight from this London phenom's stellar debut.

16 CAESARS
"JERK IT OUT" ASTRALWERKS
 Already in your head thanks to those iPod commercials, a Farfisa-powered garage jam about going nuts and loving every moment.

17 JUELZ SANTANA
"DROP A COUPLE POUNDS" DIPSETMIXTAPES.COM
 Like the gangsta Weird Al, this Harlem oddball spoofs "Drop It Like It's Hot" with a weight-loss twist.

18 SPOON
"I TURN MY CAMERA ON" MERGE
 If this jagged groove isn't all about making sex tapes, these Austin art-poppers have us fooled.

19 112
"IF I HIT" DEF SOUL
 On the R&B raunch-o-meter, it's a few humps more than Usher, a few reacharounds shy of R. Kelly.

20 GARBAGE
"BAD BOYFRIEND" GEFFEN
 Shirley Manson is back to prove, yet again, that nice guys finish last (and un-laid).



Weezer "water the plants."

ICON KEY



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March 22	Charlotte, NC	April 8	New York, NY	April 30	Seattle, WA
March 24	Miami, FL	April 14	Detroit, MI	May 4	Fresno, CA
March 25	Tampa, FL	April 15	Pittsburgh, PA	May 5	San Francisco, CA
March 26	Orlando, FL	April 16	Columbia, MD	May 6	Sacramento, CA
March 28	Norfolk, VA	April 18	Cleveland, OH	May 8	Anaheim, CA
March 29	Harrisburg, PA	April 19	Chicago, IL	May 9	San Diego, CA
March 31	Pittsburgh, PA	April 21	St. Louis, MO	May 11	Phoenix, AZ



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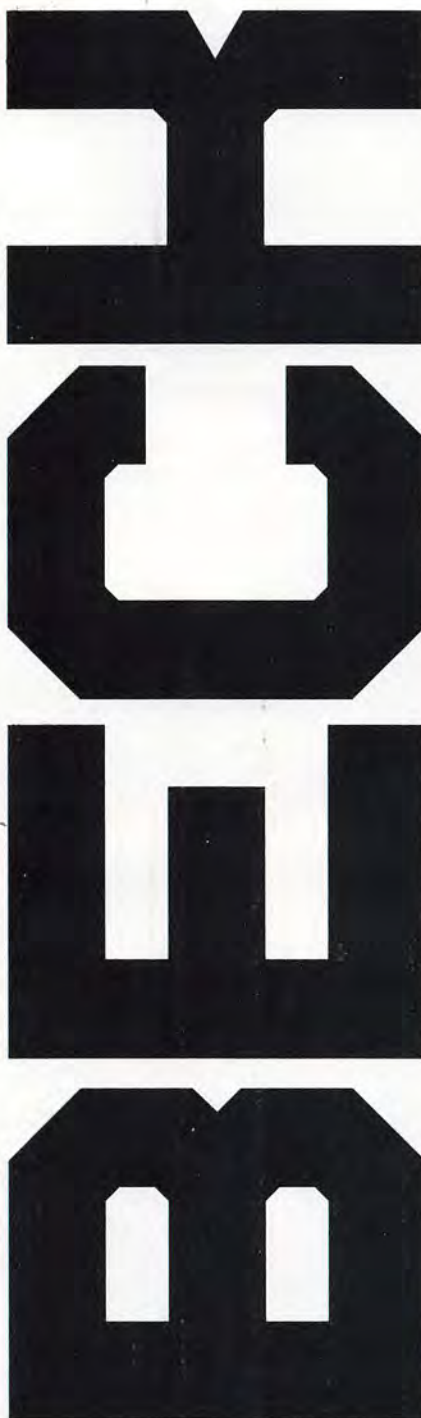
KNOWING STUFF IS GOOD

Madonna: In
charge of making
Kabbalah look
"fun."

S IS FOR SEX!
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF ROCK & ROLL
SEX SCANDALS P.66

Dear Superstar

YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?



THE WAIFISH, AGELESS TROUBADOUR PLEDGES HIS DEVOTION TO L. RON, DR. MOREAU AND—EVEN MORE SHOCKINGLY—BILLY RAY CYRUS.

BY VICTORIA DESILVERIO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHERYL NIELDS

"I BLEND APRICOT, sassafras and cucumber rejuvenation with blubber and formaldehyde," deadpans Beck, trying to explain how, even with a mossy beard obscuring his rosy cheeks, he exudes eternal youth.

Absurdly stylish, in a just-walked-off-the-stage, partied-all-night-and-didn't-have-time-to-change kind of way, Beck disembarks from his BMW sedan and makes for a sunny chair outside his manager's Hollywood office. At 34, 11 years after his accidental hit "Loser," he can still pass for an undernourished twenty-something slacker.

But a lot has changed since *Blender* last sat with Beck. Three years ago, following a painful breakup, he released *Sea Change*, a record of wound-wallowing torch songs. Since then, he has married fellow Scientologist Marissa Ribisi, twin sister of actor Giovanni, and had a baby boy, Cosimo Henri.

Returning to his carefree, junkyard funk-collage roots, he's just released his eighth album, *Guero*. Buzzing like a madcap Mexican fiesta, it's the spiritual sequel to 1996's double-platinum *Odelay*.

"OK, my real secret is that I'm a man of kelp," he says, cracking a smile. "This is for *Blender*, so I'm trying to be funny."

An accommodating mood that we hope lasts for the famously private superstar, as he's confronted with your cunningly prying questions...

YOU NAMED YOUR SON COSIMO HENRI. WERE THERE ANY NAMES YOU DIDN'T CONSIDER?

KRISSYCREME, MCLEAN, VA

All the names I liked were the equivalent of overstuffed furniture, like Barnaby or Remington. I liked Sherlock too. My wife wanted to name him Henry, and I think in the delirium at the hospital, it somehow became Henri. Cosimo came from us wanting an Italian name because her whole family has Italian names. But he'll always have Henry to fall back on.

AT THE HEIGHT OF BECKMANIA, WHAT WAS YOUR CRAZIEST CELEBRITY ENCOUNTER?

ELLRON87, GERMANTOWN, PA

Puff Daddy was a good one. I was down before he was the Diddy. For a while, he was following me around while I was on tour. Sometimes he would even have his own dressing room. He would be up on stage, too. When the tour was over, we went into the studio—the Boyz II Men studio—but I was really tired. He wanted me to rap over a looped-up "Benny and the Jets." And I just blew it. I saw him at one of those award things years later, and he avoided me. I wasn't hot anymore.

IS THERE A SAMPLE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED BUT COULDN'T AFFORD OR WEREN'T ALLOWED TO USE FOR SOME REASON?

EAU_DE_LAY, FAIRFIELD, CT

I tried to sample Barbie once, but Mattel wouldn't let me. It was a talking Barbie, and she said stuff like, "We can go shopping! And get pizza with your sister!" For *Guero*, I tried to get Banda Machos—this huge band from Mexico that I mention in lyrics on one of the songs—but they wouldn't let me. They play the kind of →



Beck's attempt to clone himself was flawed at best.

With wife Marissa Ribisi in L.A., February 2004.



music you would hear coming out of a car on the street.

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU HIT SOMEONE?

AD, RAWK, MADISON, NH

For a summer, when I was 7, I was taking Taekwon-Do. A guy in the class started to call a girl names, so I defended her honor by fighting him. We both had new jogging suits: Mine was green and his was powder blue. I put a big muddy footprint on his pants and that's what put it over the edge. He grabbed my ankle, a move that had not been taught in class. And I fell on a sprinkler.



YOUR GRANDFATHER, AL HANSEN, PUT OUT A PUNK FANZINE AND WAS A PIONEER OF THE FLUXUS ART MOVEMENT. WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOU HAD THE WORLD'S COOLEST GRANDPA?

MELLOW_OLD, MOUNT WASHINGTON, NH

When I was 6 or 7, I knew something was up when he came to stay with us and he had all these exotic things with him: an African machete and shopping bags full of stuff that he'd make art out of. He had huge leather boots that looked like he had walked across half of Asia. While I was at school, he took my plastic rocking horse from the garage and covered it in cigarette butts and spray-painted it silver. I was stunned and amazed and a little bit horrified.

YOU'RE A SURPRISINGLY SHARP MC. AS A SHORTY, DID YOU BATTLE RHYME ON THE STREETS OF EAST L.A.?

FRANKHERDER, ALTOONA, PA

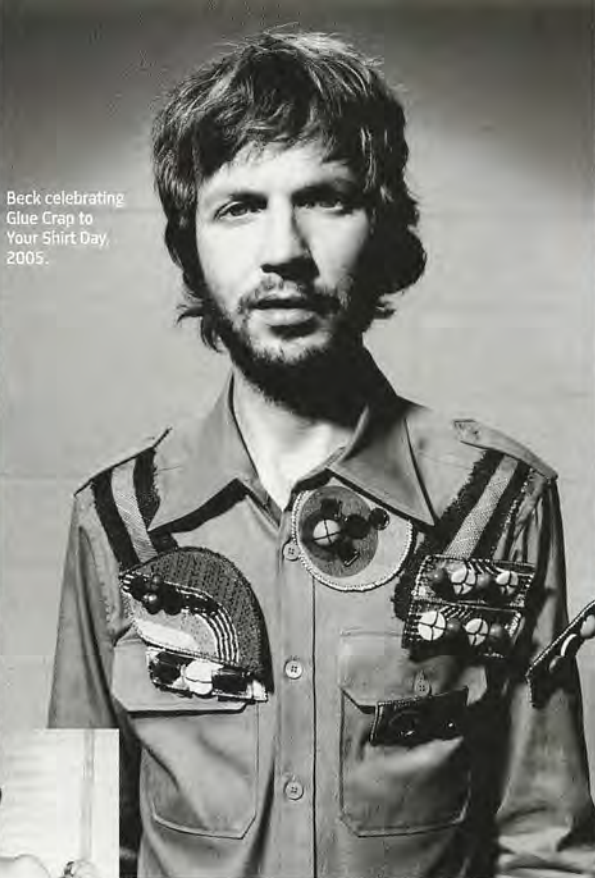
No, I never did it on the streets, but I got a rap karaoke machine at Best Buy and a bunch of my friends used to play with it in my living room, next to the fireplace. We would battle, with our own hype men. We had our own 8 Mile thing happening.

WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, YOU LIVED IN MARLON BRANDO'S FORMER HOUSE. DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING INTERESTING ABOUT HIM?

MAROON555, JENKINTOWN, PA

No, not really, I was maybe too young to

Beck celebrating Glue Crap to Your Shirt Day, 2005.



notice. But I'm really into Brando—especially *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. It's one of his secret masterpieces. The character I created on *Midnite Vultures* was actually half Brando. The super flamboyant side was

Prince, but the dissolute, romantic and deranged side was Brando. I'm obsessed with the acting master classes he did in L.A. My former keyboard player was hired as the lunchtime entertainment, and I'm praying the tapes get released. I've heard stories of homeless people and Brando dressing in muumuus.

you're just going to get some third-hand nonsense. There's a lot there, and you can't do the *Reader's Digest* version of Scientology. They are teaching kids how to read in Russia and helping people get off drugs—there are a lot of facets to it. There's no way you can condense such a vast body of work into a sound bite.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ARRESTED?

PARISIDEKICK, TENAFLY, NJ

I almost got arrested in an amusement park when I was about 12. My friend and I were on a ride, spitting down on people. But security guys scared us straight, and I never spit on anyone again.

YOU SEEM TO BE GOOD AT A LOT OF THINGS, BUT WHAT'S YOUR SECRET TALENT OR PARTY TRICK?

JUSTINE_SWEETS, BERKELEY

I used to be a secret breakdancer, but I gave that secret away. I boxed for a while. A doctor told me to because I had a lung thing. I didn't think I would like it, but I did.

YOUR MOM WAS IN WARHOL MOVIES WHEN SHE WAS 13. HOW DID YOU REBEL AGAINST SUCH A HIPSTER PARENT?

SATANKITTIE, PINOS ALTOS, NM

My brother and I never had that rebellion feeling. Both my parents were really young—people always thought they were our older brother and sister. When I was 20, my mom was still in her 30s, so we were more like friends. We could relate to the same things. Like when N.W.A came out, we were all into it.

WHAT'S THE DUMBEST THING YOU'VE EVER BOUGHT?

LIGHTNINGSTRIKES, ANAHEIM, CA

I buy lots of dumb things. I bought that →

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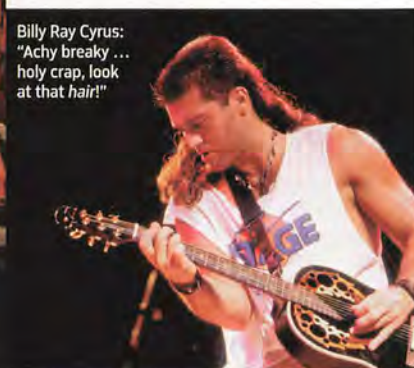
IN STORES THIS APRIL



The Arcade Fire: "Good mourning!"



Beck in *Southlander*: Ah yes—the grunge years.



Billy Ray Cyrus: "Achy breaky ... holy crap, look at that hair!"

thing where you stick pads to your knees and your chest and they are connected to wires and you hit them and make drum sounds. There's this guy named McRorie who wears the get-up and is a one-man band. He's amazing. I really want to get him on tour, actually.

YOU ONCE SAID THAT YOU LISTENED TO BAD MUSIC BEFORE YOU SAT DOWN TO MAKE RECORDS. WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF BAD MUSIC?
XXCHRISXX, GLENCOE, IL

When I was making *Odelay*, I was listening to a lot of Billy Ray Cyrus. I used to go to these line-dancing clubs that were big in the early '90s. If you go to those places, you can understand why that music sounds the way it does. It's all about the lighting rigs and the kind of shoes people are wearing.

YOU DON'T DRINK, YOU DON'T SMOKE, YOU DON'T DO DRUGS: WHAT DO YOU DO?
JACKASS587, DENVER, NC

I stay up all night. It's my worst habit. I don't sleep. I'm terminally jet-lagged. At midnight, I start getting ideas, and then I'm up all night. But I enjoy being awake when everyone's asleep, and there's no noise in the atmosphere.

WHAT POSTERS DID YOU HAVE ON YOUR BEDROOM WALL AS A KID?
ILUVKILLERS, TOLEDO

I had a *Harold and Maude* poster when I was about 7 that I got from my godfather. I had a Beatles poster from the *White Album* too. When I was a teenager, I had a Velvet Underground poster I was really proud of. It was a black-and-white shot of them performing at the Factory. But for a lot of my teenage years I didn't have my own room. I was sharing the living room with my brother, so I didn't have a lot of my own space.



"I TRIED TO SAMPLE BARBIE ONCE, BUT MATTEL WOULDN'T LET ME."

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE EVER RECEIVED?

BOREDSHTLESS, TOMBSTONE, AZ

I've been waiting for some advice! Other musicians have gotten close to older musicians who can help them out. I never had that. I did receive bad advice though. Somebody in the industry told me that if I put out *Odelay*, it would be a big mistake because there were no real songs. So, for a few months before it came out, I was convinced everyone was going to hate it and that it would be a total disaster. I was shocked when it wasn't.

WHAT'S THE LAMEST JOB YOU EVER HAD?

STARZ_LIKE_ME, LIVINGSTON, NJ

Oh man, I've had a whole lifetime of jobs. I was a mover, house painter, video store clerk. I used to work for a clown at kids' parties and I wore a soda jerk uniform and made hot dogs. But the worst job was when I worked at an industrial factory in Watts

unloading big metal beams off a truck. I was 17 and getting, like, \$3.75 an hour. It was grueling, but now I have a deep appreciation for crew guys who break down stages and load them on trucks.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL NIGHT AT THE HANSEN HOUSE.

HARRY_PALMS, COLLEGE PARK, MD

My wife and I with the baby (who is seven months old now), helping him with his toys, feeding him his food, trying to get it in his mouth before he

smears it on his face. He's trying to eat the cellphone. Listening to music. Art projects happening all over the place.

DID WRITING SONGS ABOUT YOUR BREAKUP MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?

BANGADASH_99, TAMPA

You know, when you have a feeling that you don't know what to do with, it does. *Sea Change* was hard to put out. It took me a couple of years to decide to even do it. It was really difficult to talk about, and I couldn't articulate it beyond the music.

EVER TEMPTED TO BECOME A DILETTANTE AND TAKE A TURN AT ACTING?

SCOOPS66, AUGUSTA, ME

I don't really get offers anymore, but in the mid-'90s I was getting asked to be in movies all the time. I'm sure they are on to other people now. I passed on some good things, though, like *Ghost World*. I was asked to play a cowboy in *All the Pretty Horses*, and for *School of Rock* they wanted me to be a record-store guy. It's probably a one in a hundred chance any movie would be good. And even if it is, it's just a musician doing something because they can and not because it's necessary or anything. A few years ago, I was in a friend of mine's indie film, *Southlander*. It was just a little part and I was playing myself. Or some idea of myself.

HEY, YOU'RE ON THE "CUTTING EDGE"—CAN YOU TURN ME ON TO ANY NEW BANDS?

MUZAK4U, LAS VEGAS

There's a whole little scene doing music with Game Boys and old videogame equipment. 8 Bit from Los Angeles and Paza from Stockholm. Nullsleep is another one. They are raw and anti-technology by embracing disused technology. Octet is cool—they are from Paris and did a remix for me. The Arcade Fire is great, but everyone knows about them.

WHAT'S THE DIRTIEST THING YOU CAN SAY IN SPANISH?

PAPERTIGERO2, ARGYLE, TX

Que putas! ["What whores!"] *Chinga tu madre!* It means "fuck your mother" or something. I hope my grandmother is reading this! Let's keep it in Spanish so she can't understand. [BLENDER]

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FLEETWOOD MAC

“Dreams”

HOW ACID, ROCKY ROMANCE AND VELVET BEDSHEETS HELPED TURN THREE BRITS AND TWO CALIFORNIANS INTO CHART-TOPPING SUPERSTARS.

BY JOHNNY BLACK

Fleetwood Mac in 1977 (from left) Mick Fleetwood, Stevie Nicks, Christine McVie, John McVie, Lindsey Buckingham



SOMETIMES inspiration strikes first thing in the morning. Sometimes it strikes over lunch. Fleetwood Mac's first No. 1 single, on the other hand, was

born on a black-velvet bed overlooking Sly Stone's cocaine pit.

It was early 1976, and Fleetwood Mac were in Sausalito, California, recording their twelfth album, *Rumours*. It would rocket them to formerly undreamed-of heights of success—and equal depths of despair.

"One day when I wasn't required in the main studio," remembers singer Stevie Nicks, "I took a Fender Rhodes piano and went into another studio that was said to belong to Sly, of Sly and the Family Stone. It was a black-and-red room, with a sunken pit in the middle where there was a piano, and a big black-velvet bed with Victorian drapes."

That room, in Sausalito's Record Plant, is also etched into the memory of drummer Mick Fleetwood: "It was usually occupied by people we didn't know, tapping razors on mirrors."

Founded in swinging '60s London by Fleetwood and bassist John McVie, Fleetwood Mac had already tasted massive success in their homeland, only to have it swept away when their brilliant lead guitarist and songwriter, Peter Green, became one of rock's first high-profile acid casualties, leaving the group and virtually falling off the face of the earth for several decades.

Relocating to America, the band spent years treading water until January 1975, when they took on two new members, the young California duo of Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks. The pair's prodigious songwriting gifts revitalized the group, but they came with a certain amount of baggage too.

"Lindsey and I were lovers," recalls Stevie, "but we were on the point of breaking up when we joined Fleetwood Mac. For the greater good of the band, though, we decided to put our breakup on hold."

By the end of 1975, the first album by the reconstituted group, *Fleetwood Mac*, had gone gold, and they had their first hit single with "Over My Head."

"We were beginning to become rock stars," recalls Nicks, "and we had to get another album together. Sausalito was as romantic as you could possibly imagine. It was gorgeous up there, right by the ocean, in this fabulous studio with Indian drapes, little hippie girls making hash cookies and everybody having dinner 'round a big kitchen table."

Under such circumstances, it should have been paradise, but Nicks and Buck-

ingham's relationship was quickly coming apart at the seams. "We had to go through this elaborate exercise of denial," explains Buckingham, "keeping our personal feelings in one corner of the room while trying to be professional in the other." Inevitably, their true feelings surfaced in the lyrics of the songs they were writing—most notably "Dreams."

"I sat down on the bed with my keyboard in front of me," recalls Nicks. "I found a drum pattern, switched my little cassette player on and wrote 'Dreams' in about 10 minutes. Right away I liked the fact that I was doing something with a dance beat, because that made it a little unusual for me."

Delighted with her brand-new, 10-minute tune, she took it to the rest of the band, who decided to record it the next day. Nicks says Buckingham didn't openly acknowledge that the lyrics—dire warnings that a man can be driven mad by loneliness in the wake of a broken love affair—were directed straight at his heart. Despite this apparent cool, though, the recriminations would eventually come.

Although a basic track for "Dreams" was completed in Sausalito, recording assistant Cris Morris remembers that "all we kept was the drum track and live vocal from Stevie—the guitars and bass were added later in Los Angeles."

"Dreams" didn't immediately wow the band's other female songwriter, Christine McVie. "When Stevie first played it for me on the piano," she says, "it was just three chords and one note in the left hand. I thought 'This is really boring,' but the Lindsey genius came into play and he fashioned three sections out of identical chords, making each section sound completely different. He created the impression that there's a thread running through the whole thing."

Mick Fleetwood revealed that Buckingham found this process agonizing. "It was most difficult for Lindsey

because Stevie was the one who pulled away emotionally. He would say, 'I'm doing this for her and making her music, but I can't have closure.'"

Well aware that Nicks had moved on and was already romancing Don Henley of the Eagles, Buckingham responded with bitterly charged songs like "Second Hand News," declaring, "One thing I think you should know/I ain't gonna miss you when you go."

Nicks insists, however, that "Dreams" was her counterpart to another of Buckingham's songs, "Go Your Own Way." "I told him that, in my heart, 'Dreams' was open and hopeful, but in 'Go Your Own Way,' his heart was closed. That's how I felt. That line, 'When the

rain washes you clean,' to me that was like being able to start again, and that's what I wanted for Lindsey. I wanted him to be happy."

The *Rumours* sessions, especially the Los Angeles portion, have become notorious as one of the most drug-fueled and decadent episodes in rock history. But Nicks insists that

"'Dreams' was written before it got really bad. As our success grew during the making of the album, we had more money, and we started dabbling more with drugs, but the cocaine didn't really start having its effect on us until later. 1980 was probably the worst. Those first four years of Fleetwood Mac were nowhere near as bad as everybody likes to imagine."

By the time "Dreams" was released, *Rumours* was already a platinum album, and Nicks's song soared to No. 1 on June 18, 1977, quickly establishing itself as her signature track.

"Sometimes you can get tired of singing a certain song over and over again," she says, "but I have never gone onstage, either with Fleetwood Mac or in my solo shows, without singing 'Dreams.' I don't think I could." [BLENDER]

VITAL STATISTICS

SONG TITLE: "Dreams"

ARTIST: Fleetwood Mac

LABEL: Warner Bros.

PERFORMERS: Stevie

Nicks: vocals/piano

Lindsey Buckingham:

guitars/vocals

Christine McVie:

piano/vocals

Mick

Fleetwood:

drums/

percussion

John McVie:

bass

PRODUCERS:

Fleetwood Mac with

Richard Dashut and

Ken Caillat

RELEASED: April 16,

1977

HIGHEST CHART

POSITION: 1



WHO'S WHO

STEVIE NICKS

El Lay rock's original witchy woman, and Fleetwood Mac's most successful solo artist.

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM

Guitar wiz, arranger, producer, all-round renaissance man and, notoriously, Stevie's first big love.

CHRISTINE MCVIE

The Mac's other female singer-songwriter, composer of several hits and former wife of bassist John McVie.



Ask Blender

SOLVING POP CONUNDRUMS SINCE 2001

I HEARD ALICIA KEYS WAS A CHILD ACTOR ON *THE COSBY SHOW*—CAN YOU TELL ME WHO SHE PLAYED?

OPHELIA COLLINS, YONKERS, NY

Credited as Alicia Cook, a 4-year-old Keys appeared on a first-season episode broadcast on March 28, 1985. She played Maria, one of the many friends of Bill Cosby's daughter Rudy (Keshia Knight Pulliam) allowed to stay over for a slumber party. At one point, Cosby plays "bucking bronco" by bouncing each partygoer, including the future soul star, on his knee. "I haven't seen Bill Cosby since," Keys said recently. "He probably wouldn't even remember."

BILL COSBY BOUNCED A 4-YEAR-OLD ALICIA KEYS ON HIS KNEE.

DID NICK DRAKE REALLY HANG OUT AND JAM WITH THE ROLLING STONES?

RANDALL EPSTEIN, MIAMI

The tortured singer-songwriter never actually jammed with the rock gods—that would have been too weird. But on a North African trip before going to college in 1967, the young Drake did briefly hang out with the Stones, who were busy soaking up the druggy, hippie ambience and escaping the stresses of a recent drug bust.

According to fellow traveler Richard Charkin, Drake and friends spotted Mick Jagger lounging in a Marrakech restaurant with a couple of girls and temporarily joined their throng. "We persuaded Nick, who was very shy, to play for them, which he did. And they were more than polite."

While Drake was in Tangiers before returning home, local police mistook him and his long-haired English friends for the Stones and tried—unsuccessfully—to bust them for drugs.

IS IT TRUE THAT THE FATHER OF SEBASTIAN BACH FROM SKID ROW WAS A CELEBRATED ARTIST?

HARRIS INVEGLIA, NEWTOWN, PA

For a while in the '80s, the hair-metal legend's dad was a semi-important figure in the art world. The postmodern paintings of David Bierk were highly intellectual in tone. Based in Peterborough, Ontario, until his death in 2002, he



WHAT DOES THE NAME "LINKIN PARK" REFER TO?

CODY APPLAGATE, BELFAST, MAINE

Linkin Park should, of course, be spelled Lincoln Park, after a park in Santa Monica, California, where the band was formed. They actually changed the spelling because that Web site domain name was cheaper. "We went on tour right after we changed the name, and we pretty quickly realized there was a Lincoln Park in every town," said guitarist Brad Delson. "Kids would come up to us and go, 'Dude! You're from Lincoln Park too? What side?'"

YOUR QUESTIONS

Ask Blender, 1040 Sixth Avenue, 22nd floor, New York, NY 10018

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Please include your first and last name, your hometown and your state or province.

made near-exact copies of the works of old masters like Vermeer, then framed them in steel or concrete. This, according to a *New York Times* obituary, created a "tension between humanism and old masterly craft on the one hand, and Modernist abstraction and industrial fabrication on the other." Maybe his son was attempting a similar tension with "Youth Gone Wild" and "Slave to the Grind." Or not.

IN "SHIVER AND SHAKE" FROM THE CURE'S 1987 ALBUM *KISS ME, KISS ME*, IS ROBERT SMITH REALLY DISSING BANDMATE LOL TOLHURST?

PETE HARRIETY, WICHITA, KS

That's right. By the late '80s, the relationship between Smith and drummer/keyboardist Laurence "Lol" Tolhurst

was rapidly breaking down—partly because of Tolhurst's drinking problem in a band already full of sizable drinkers. This inspired one of the harshest intra-band rants ever composed: The subject is apparently "a babbling face," "useless and ugly" and "a fucking waste," with Smith saying he wishes to "smash you until you're not here anymore."

Surprisingly, Tolhurst gets a co-writer credit on the song (for musical duties, one must presume). Even worse, during the recording sessions in Miraval, France, when Smith performed the vocals, he forced his old school buddy to stand in front of him and take the abuse head-on. Tolhurst was fired in 1988. In 1992 he filed a lawsuit claiming he deserved more money for his creative input. He lost the case, but for two years the band was effectively kept on ice. [BLENDER]



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The A-Z of Rock & Roll Sex Scandals

What beloved band enjoyed molesting their male roadies? What *other* pop stars prefer the company of children? Find out all this and more in our comprehensive guide to the seamiest moments in music history.

BY JANE BUSSMAN, DALE HRABI, STEVE KANDELL, BEN MITCHELL, ALEXIS PETRIDIS AND BRIAN RAFTERY.

ANDERSON, PAMELA

MODEL and former *Baywatch* star, sometime consort of **KID ROCK**, Poison's **BRET MICHAELS**, **MICHAEL BOLTON**, **FRED DURST**. Most famous within rock circles for co-starring in 1996 sex tape made with then-husband and father of her children **TOMMY LEE** (see also *Huge Genitalia*) in which he masturbates over his wife's Zeppelin-like breasts and honks the horn of a speedboat using his penis.

ASPHYXIOPHILIA

PRACTICE of heightening sexual pleasure by applied self-suffocation. INXS vocalist **MICHAEL HUTCHENCE**'s 1997 death in an Australian hotel room (official cause: suicide) is widely believed to have been a kinky asphyxiophilia misadventure. Hutchence's partner, Paula Yates, initially disputed the rumors about Hutchence's death—"he was not having a wank on a door"—but then changed her mind; he was having a wank on a door, after all.

BISEXUALITY

ATTRACTION or behavior directed toward more than one sex. **DAVID BOWIE** met ex-wife Angie when they were both "fucking the same bloke" (record executive Calvin Mark Lee). Angie later lectured on bisexuality at posh English private school Eton. Also doubling their chances: **MADONNA** (see also *Fake Lesbians*; *Vanilla Ice*), **MICHAEL STIPE** and **ELTON JOHN**, who explained, "People should be very free with sex. They should draw the line at goats."

CRACK-SMOKING



INGESTION of potent crystalline form of cocaine, the drug of choice of funk singer

RICK JAMES. In 1991, 24-year-old Frances Alley claimed that an intoxicated James ordered her to strip naked, tied her to a chair and burned her with a hot pipe, after which she was hit in the face with a handgun and forced to perform cunnilingus upon James's girlfriend. Alley went to the police and—following a separate, drug-fueled assault on another woman—James was put on trial. Charges included false imprisonment, torture, forcible oral copulation and aggravated mayhem.

DILDO

OBJECT shaped like an erect penis used for sexual stimulation. For fans unable to experience the real thing, **DURAN DURAN** guitarist Warren Cuccurullo (see also *Web Site*, *Personal*) marketed an 8" dildo, the Rock Rod, modeled on his own genitalia, in 2002. In general, such sex toys are not recommended for use outside the bedroom: In 1999 two members of German industrial metal outfit **RAMMSTEIN** were arrested for lewd and lascivious behavior during a concert in Worcester, Massachusetts, for simulating sodomy with a large dildo that emitted milk.

B

Beverly Hills Police Department

UPSCALE Los Angeles law-enforcement bureau. Responsible for the 1998 arrest of **GEORGE MICHAEL** for "engaging in a lewd act" in a public restroom. Michael put a romantic sheen on events, saying a "slightly inebriated pop star on a lovely summer's day" was coaxed by a "well over six foot, fairly attractive" stranger. Then they looked at each other's penises.

George Michael, surrounded by potential love interests.



DURST, FRED

FLESHY LIMPBIKIT mouthpiece. Notorious for chronicling romantic liaisons via overwrought blog entries and, more graphically, a widely circulated rear-entry nookie video (see also X-Rated Video) co-starring an unidentified model and Fred's ample stomach. The three-minute clip—allegedly taken from Durst's computer while it was being repaired—is the latest in a career-long obsession with proving to the public that he has, despite common sense indicating otherwise, had sex with a woman.

EXPLICIT ALBUM ART



COMMON-PLACE controversy-starter among conservatives and Wal-Mart executives;

banned or altered covers have depicted: naked underage girls (Blind Faith, *Blind Faith*; anything by **BOW WOW WOW**); visible nipples (Jane's Addiction, *Nothing's Shocking* and *Ritual de lo Habitual*); trace amounts of pubic hair (The Black Crowes, *Amorica*); and, worst of all, wildly unkempt pubic hair (John Lennon and Yoko Ono, *Two Virgins*).

T.A.T.U.:
Desperately
in need of a
cookie.



F



Fake Lesbians

PERPETRATORS of pseudo-sapphic acts, often employed as pop publicity stunt. Especially ingenious were entirely heterosexual teenage Russian duo T.A.T.U., who promoted their 2002 album, *200 km/h in the Wrong Lane*, with a doe-eyed make-out session on *The Tonight Show*—cut by network censors—and massed girl-on-girl action at the 2003 MTV Movie Awards. Madonna (see also Bisexuality; Vanilla Ice)—after a same-sex dalliance with Naomi Campbell in her 1992 book, *Sex*—proved that middle age is no bar to publicity-friendly sexual experimentation by kissing both Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera at 2003's MTV Video Music Awards.



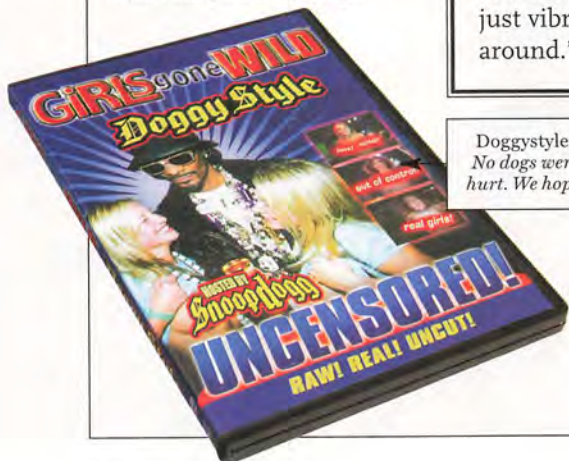
Relax!
And, uh,
be gay.

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

'80S BRITISH dance group whose enthusiasm for S&M outfits, suggestive lyrics and wanton homoeroticism was dimly viewed by the regulators of British broadcasting. Enjoyed short-lived but nonetheless scandalous career, thanks to wise PR and songs like "Rage Hard" and "Relax"—which featured the inquisitive come-on "When you wanna come?" The shocked BBC banned the "Relax" single in the U.K., but the kinky imagery of the video helped it sell more than a million copies.

GIRLS GONE WILD

SALACIOUS but highly successful home-video series. Employed hip-hop star and herb connoisseur **SNOOP DOGG** to host 2002's *Girls Gone Wild: Doggy Style*, a further installment of footage of drunk girls flashing breasts. In 2003, two women filed suit against Snoop, claiming they weren't aware they were being filmed; the case was settled out of court. Snoop—who in 2002 won two Adult Video News awards for his Hustler-distributed porn movie *Doggystyle*—has distanced himself from GGW, claiming the tapes hurt his attempts at adopting a more family-friendly image.



Doggystyle:
No dogs were
hurt. We hope.

GO-GO'S, THE

BUBBLY girl group, formed in Los Angeles, 1978. Their fresh all-American image was undermined by the post-gig pranks captured in a grainy, heavily-circulated underground video. The tape shows the intoxicated band harassing one of their drunken male roadies, spying on him as he masturbates in a bathroom stall, covering his ass with shaving cream and eventually corking him with a dildo. None of the women appear naked in the hour-long video—but lead singer **BELINDA CARLISLE** subsequently posed for *Playboy*.

INFLATABLE PENIS

OUTSIZED stage prop typically used to make a statement about the performers' antisocial credentials and/or relaxed sexual values. Pioneered by the **ROLLING STONES** in 1975, the group's 20-foot faux genital organ would be ridden by vocalist Mick Jagger during performances of groupie anthem, "Star Star," often despite prior warnings from law-enforcement officers. Similar device also employed by the **BEASTIE BOYS** on their 1987 *Licensed to Ill* tour—only five feet longer and with the addition of a motor.



JESUS JUICE



QUASI-RELIGIOUS alias given to white wine by 46-year-old King of Pop and amateur sommelier **MICHAEL JACKSON**; red wine correspondingly known as "Jesus's Blood." Sipping both from cans of soda, Jackson allegedly plied a 13-year-old boy and his brother with the "holy" drink—along with antihistamines—before making them watch pornography. A former associate of Jackson's claims the Juice once caused Jackson to pass out on the floor of a plane during a flight to Germany.

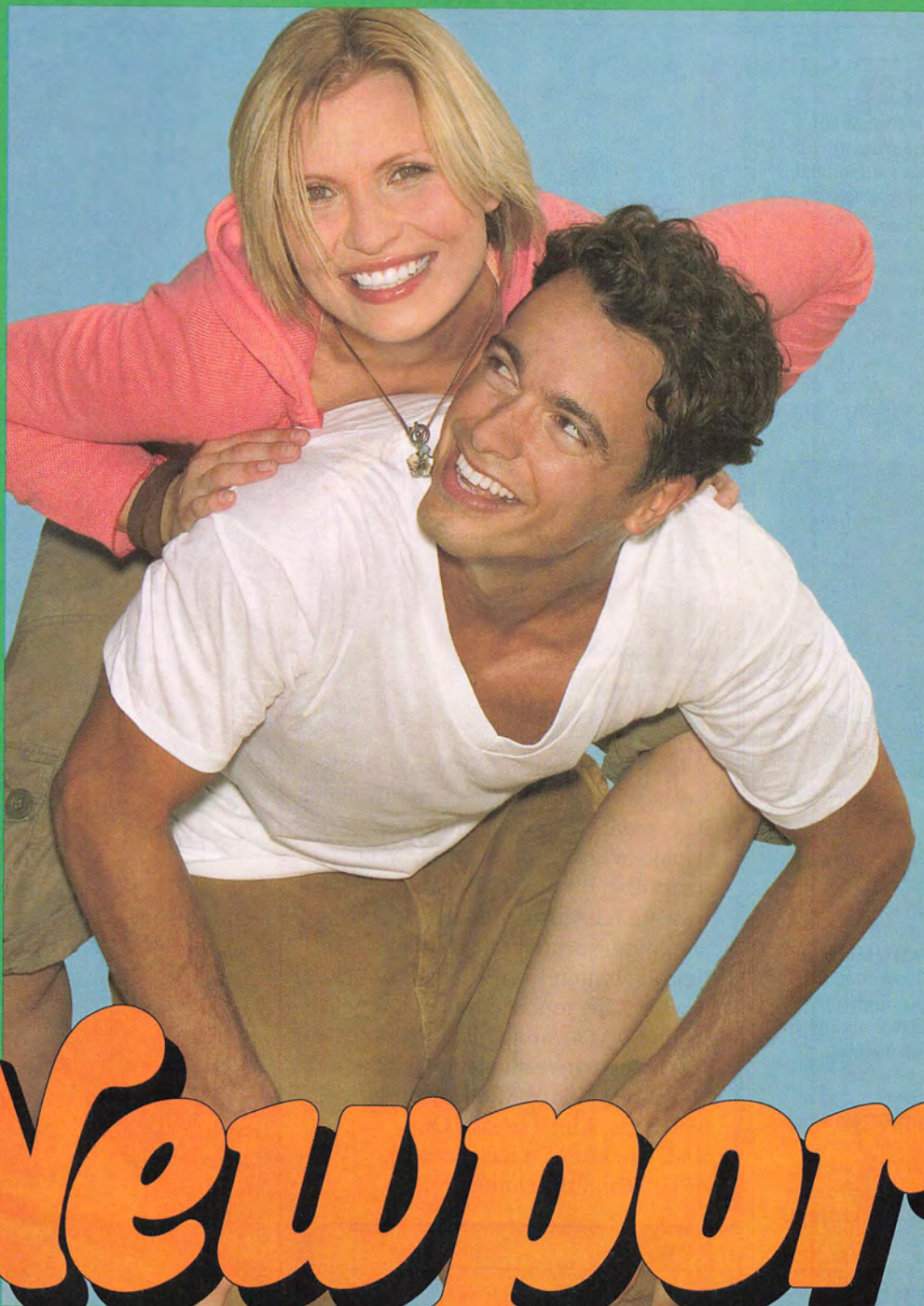
H

Huge Genitalia

GENEROUS endowment that possibly explains much about certain stars: **Q-TIP**'s lyrical swagger, the self-confidence behind **HUEY LEWIS**'s assertion that it was hip to be square, etc. Undisputed cock-rock king remains **IGGY POP** (see also Public Indecency), due to willingness to publicly display his enormous good fortune. Stooges gigs were enlivened by unscheduled appearance of Pop member: "He put his dick on the speaker," remembered one witness. "It was just vibrating around."



Iggy Pop:
Master
surveyor.



Newport[®] pleasure!



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

Newport, Newport Medium, Newport (package design),
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Newport Pleasure and Newport Spinnaker TM Lorillard
Licensing Company LLC Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off.

Lights Box: 10 mg. "tar," 0.8 mg. nicotine; Medium Box: 13 mg.
"tar," 1.1 mg. nicotine; Box: 18 mg. "tar," 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per
cigarette by FTC method.

JUDAS PRIEST

1970s "HELLBENT for Leather" British metal band whose drummer, 55-year-old David Holland, was sent to prison in 2004 for the attempted rape of a learning-disabled 17-year-old boy. Holland had been giving the boy drum lessons and, according to court papers, had also been providing him with booze and porn in order to win his trust. Holland did 10 years in Priest; he's been sentenced to eight years in prison.



Bladder full, R. Kelly eyes a nearby playground.

KELLY, R.

R&B SUPERSTAR known for an alleged compulsion to seduce and urinate on **UNDERAGE GIRLS**, blurrily documented in a 27-minute **X-RATED VIDEO** that surfaced in 2002. Charged with 21 counts of child pornography, Kelly quickly released whiny single "Heaven, I Need a Hug" and, with a trial pending, still insists he's not the urinator in question. Comic **CHRIS ROCK** has expressed doubts: "Motherfucker, we know what you look like. That's you, OK? ... [Your] damn Soul Train award [is] right next to the bed!"

LOVE CHILDREN

ILLEGITIMATE children with paternity claims, often afflicting rock stars with fuzzy memories and dusty wallets. **THE ROLLING STONES'** Mick Jagger finally admitted being the biological father of baby Lucas—after his mother arranged a DNA test. **TED NUGENT**—"Father of the Year at children's school" according to tednugent.com—doesn't like paying for his love child. The real downside is their ageing effect: young fans of Bush's **GAVIN ROSSDALE**, 38—father to a 15-year-old—realized he was old enough, literally, to be their dad.



L

Lil' Kim

X-RATED rapper, né Kimberly Denise Jones. The ex and protégé of **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.** pioneered public shirtlessness—usually wearing what appear to be yarmulkes on her nipples. Despite postulating fellatio as morally superior to shopping, surprisingly claims to take her inspiration from Diana Ross, saying, "She touched me, in a way, when I was a young girl." Ross picked up where she left off at the 1999 MTV Video Music Awards, squeezing Kim's breast. One Web site boasts it has pictures of Lil' Kim fully clothed.

Lil' Kim: Always calls "skins" in pickup football games.

MANN ACT

FEDERAL statute forbidding the interstate transportation of women for immoral purposes. Initiated **CHUCK BERRY**'s career in scandal, when, in 1960, he was sentenced to five years in prison for taking a 14-year-old girl from Arizona to Missouri to work at his Bandstand club. In 1994, Berry settled out of court over allegations that he had secretly placed cameras in the ladies' restroom cubicles of his Berry Park property; later claimed staff there had sold pictures to a porn mag of women playing with his ding-a-ling.



"ME SO HORNY"

1989 rap record—named for sample of prostitute from Stanley Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket*—by Florida's **2LIVE CREW**, whose *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* CD became the first album to be legally ruled obscene in the U.S. Later bids for credibility—a line of Homeboy Condoms and AIDS-consciousness release "Who's Fuckin' Who"—undermined by frontman Luther Campbell's claim to have enjoyed oral sex with fans onstage, and the Clinton/



Lewinsky-themed make-over "Bill So Horny: The Presidential Remix."

MYSTIKAL

BORN Michael Tyler, MC ("Shake Ya Ass") and Operation Desert Storm vet convicted for sexual battery in 2004. An image-conscious sexual assailant, Tyler blackmailed his hairstylist into submitting to anal and oral sex with him and two others, but not until she had braided his hair. Facing life in prison on a charge of aggravated rape, Tyler pleaded guilty in exchange for a reduced sentence.

NEIL, VINCE

CHUBBY **MÖTLEY CRÜE** frontman in 2004 sentenced to a 30-day suspended jail term, \$1,000 fine and anger-management training after attempting to strangle prostitute TriXXie Blue.



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Red Light District
REDLIGHTDISTRICTVIDEO.COM

We'll always have Paris—on DVD!

O



One Night in Paris

SEX tape featuring knickerless heiress **PARIS HILTON** and then-boyfriend Rick Salomon, filmed in 1999. A three-minute version appeared online, which Salomon said was bootlegged; in 2004 a Salomon-sanctioned 45 minutes became the year's best-selling porn video, snaring him a reported \$7 million. Salomon claimed he had to release it to scotch allegations that Paris was drugged and assaulted. Paris was subsequently awarded a percentage of the profits—and her condition led Conan O'Brien to describe a later hotel-room robbery as "another man who got in and out without her noticing."

PLASTER CASTER, CYNTHIA

SOCALLY awkward Chicago art student/groupie; achieved notoriety in the late 1960s by casting rock stars' erections in plaster—including **JIMI HENDRIX's** menacing phallus (6 1/4 inches in circumference)—comically exploiting male narcissism in a quest for trophy sex. Initially a gimmick to distinguish herself among groupies, her increasingly professional art led to media rumors that she could only orgasm while casting, and to the 1977 Kiss song "Plaster Caster"—written by **GENE SIMMONS**, who has yet to merit a molding.

PUBLIC INDECENCY

CRIMINAL misdemeanor that typically involves the whipping out of genitals onstage to express contempt for fans' blind idolatry (Pop, Iggy) or to solidify a reputation as prankish libertines (Chili Peppers, Red Hot). First popularized by the Doors' **JIM MORRISON** at a March 1, 1968, Miami concert, during which he blathered drunkenly, screeched "There are no rules!" and allegedly aired his penis. Public outcry (including a Rally for Decency attended by 30,000 shaken teens) led to Morrison's arrest and conviction, after which he got pudgy, wrote bad poetry and died at 27 in a Paris bathtub.

QUEEN

BRITISH band fronted by bisexual **FREDDIE MERCURY**, perhaps the most libidinous man in the history of recorded sound. Launch party for 1978 album *Jazz* displayed Mercury's trademark subtle approach: naked hermaphrodite dwarves serving cocaine from trays strapped to their heads, transsexual strippers, naked dancers in bamboo cages, nude models wrestling in baths filled with raw liver and Samoan women smoking cigarettes with their genitals.



Freddie Mercury: Taunting PETA from beyond the grave.

NIPPLES

SMALL conical projections on surface of mammary gland; staple of rock outrage. The heavily decorated nipple of **JANET JACKSON**, exposed by **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** during 2004's Super Bowl halftime show, led to the FCC's fining CBS \$500,000. 2004 also saw **COURTNEY LOVE** apparently start to show hers to the world, one person at a time—beginning with a nonplussed David Letterman, then outside a Manhattan branch of Wendy's, where she invited a 23-year-old man to suck one of them.

And that's why we had to have freakin' Paul McCartney this year.



Mick Jagger hires five more lawyers.



R

Rolling Stones, The

ROCK & roll band, formed in London, 1962. Viewed as deviant ever since guitarist **KEITH RICHARDS**'s country home, Redlands, was raided by police in 1967 and reports—since dismissed as apocryphal—circulated that singer **MICK JAGGER** had been caught consuming a chocolate bar from between the legs of then-girlfriend Marianne Faithfull. View reinforced by 1972's sleazy unreleased tour movie, *Cocksucker Blues*. Pronounced "sinful" by a Tallahassee preacher in 1975, the group has since caused disgust by using bondage-themed images of bruised young ladies to promote the album *Black and Blue* (1976), been suspected of carnal impropriety with Canada's first lady, Margaret Trudeau (1977), and raised eyebrows when 52-year-old bassist **BILL WYMAN** married 19-year-old Mandy Smith in 1989, six years after beginning their relationship (see also Underage Girls). Recent misbehavior has been restricted to Jagger's **LOVE CHILDREN** and "love rat" promiscuity.



SHAKUR, TUPAC

MURDERED rapper and renowned "player," Shakur was made to submit to HIV tests before *Poetic Justice* co-star Janet Jackson would kiss him. Imprisoned in 1995 for felony sexual assault in controversial gang-rape case; he told **MICKEY ROURKE** he had been set up by an "FBI snitch" whom **MIKE TYSON** had warned him about from prison. While jailed, Shakur sent enough racy poems to a female pen pal to form her book *Inside a Thug's Heart*. Even two-timed behind bars, marrying Keisha Morris while still imprisoned.

SIMMONS, GENE

BORN Chaim Witz (Israel, 1949), Yeshiva-educated rocker noted for elaborate makeup. Claims to have bedded 4,600 women, an allegation he backs with as-yet-unseen Polaroid inventory. His tongue is so long he can apparently perform oral sex "from across the room." Sells red latex "Tongue Lubricated" **KISS** Kondoms featuring Gene Simmons; now everyone can have sex with Gene Simmons for \$4.95. Asked what he looks for in a woman, replied "me." (See also Plaster Caster, Cynthia.)

SMELL THE GLOVE

Fictitious metal band **SPINAL TAP**'s 14th album, detailed in Rob Reiner's 1984 mockumentary, *This Is Spinal Tap*. Also called *The Black Album* after record company blacked out original artwork of a greased, naked, dog-collar-wearing woman on all fours being ordered to sniff a man's black glove. The band objected to charges of sexism, saying they originally wanted her to be depicted smelling a penis.

TEABAGGING

TRADITIONALLY the act of lowering the testicles into another person's mouth, either as a non-penetrative sexual act or a prank played upon an unconscious or sleeping victim. Recently the definition has broadened to mean bringing the crotch into contact with any part of someone's head. On two separate occasions **MARILYN MANSON** has appeared in court for making security guards at his concerts unwitting participants in his theatrical teabagging activities.

TREVI, GLORIA

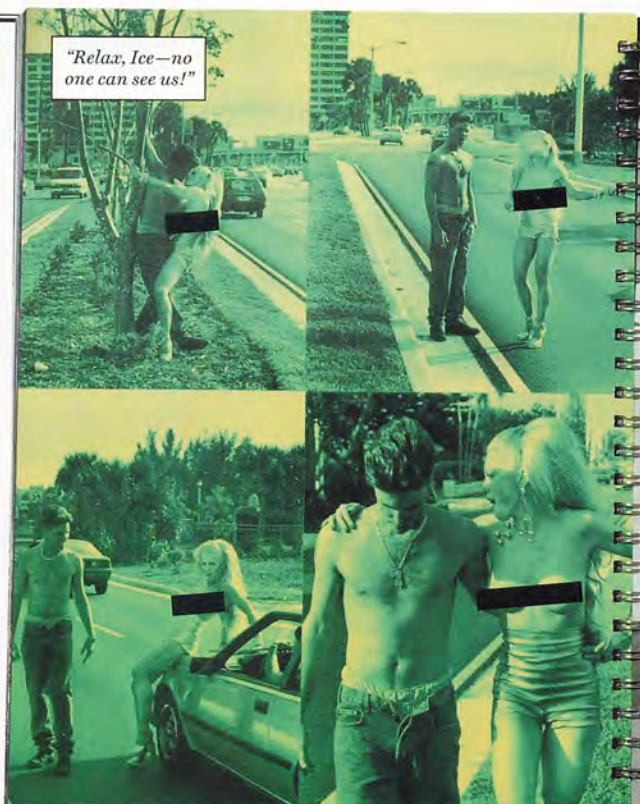
PROVOCATIVE Latin American singer known as the Mexican Madonna or La Atrevida ("The Daring One"). Trevi sold five million albums in the '90s, but in 1998, facing startling allegations of using her status to procure young girls as sex slaves for her manager, boyfriend Sergio Andrade, Trevi fled Mexico. Arrested in Brazil and imprisoned until her name was cleared due to insufficient evidence in 2004.

UNDERAGE GIRLS

SEXUAL partners beneath the legal age of consent; a mainstay in the adolescent-fantasy world of the professional musician. After **JERRY LEE LEWIS** was booed offstage during his 1958 U.K. tour due to outrage at his marriage to his 13-year-old second cousin, such relationships have been conducted with discretion. **ELVIS PRESLEY** and Aerosmith's **STEVEN TYLER** have all since enjoyed similar dalliances, a sex crime applauded within the entertainment industry: "If I played guitar I'd be Jimmy Page/The girlies I like are underage," sang the **BEASTIE BOYS** on "The New Style." (See also: Kelly, R.; Rolling Stones, The; Zeppelin, Led.)



Elvis hungrily eyes the pigin-a-blanket.



"Relax, Ice—no one can see us!"



V

Vanilla Ice

ALSO-RAN, lip-pouting rapper-dancer-actor who managed to feel up **MADONNA** (see also *Fake Lesbians*), as evidenced in her 1992 book, *Sex*. In a series of black-and-white photos, a topless Ice (né Robert Van Win-kle) gropes, grinds and scowls semi-thug-gishly with an eventually entirely naked Ciccone. He later coyly alluded to a sex tape featuring the two of them, though said video remains undiscovered.

WEB SITE, PERSONAL

INTERNET forum usually used by bands for disseminating information on forthcoming albums, appearances and tours. In a mass virtual bonding exercise, former Jane's Addiction guitarist **DAVE NAVARRO** posted images of himself manhandling his penis, asking, "once you've seen a person masturbating, how much deeper can you go?" Equally libidinous guitarist Warren Cuccurullo (see also *Dildo*) exhibited explicit videos of himself in the "members only" area of his Web site, though these were removed in 2003, shortly after he became engaged.

X-RATED VIDEOS

HOMEMADE sex-tape footage, often featuring rock star as both director and lead actor (see also



Dave Navarro just buys it for the articles.

Durst, Fred; *One Night in Paris*; Kelly, R.). Recent notable examples include **USHER**, whose rumored tape features him not only engaged in a threesome but engaged in a threesome while listening to music by a future girlfriend ("Waterfalls" by TLC). Poor boot-legged footage can make sex tapes an unedifying experience for viewers—but still better than "official" rock-related X-rated videos, e.g. *Backstage Sluts 2*, which features porn stars bumping and grinding while limpbizkit's **FRED DURST** and **WES BORLAND** leer in the background.

YOU'LL NEVER MAKE LOVE IN THIS TOWN AGAIN

BEST-SELLING tawdry memoir of four Los Angeles prostitutes going by the names of Robin, Liza, Linda and Tiffany, published in 1996. Celebrity "johns" mentioned include **BILLY IDOL**, **GEORGE HARRISON** and the Eagles—**DON HENLEY** being singled out due to his

fondness for multiple partners—although this disclosure came as a surprise only to those who assumed that successful rock musicians restrict sexual relations to intercourse with their spouse or long-term girlfriend.



ZEPPELIN, LED

BRITISH rock quartet, formed in London, 1968. Creators of heavy metal, devil-worship, guitar solos with violin bows and the many legends of backstage sexual excess chronicled in Stephen Davis's salty 1985 bio, *Hammer of the Gods*. Among the more infamous transgressions: then-28-year-old guitarist **JIMMY PAGE**'s lengthy affair with a 14-year-old groupie (see also *Underage Girls*) and a 1968 incident in which a dead fish was stuffed into a female fan's vagina.



Embarrassing Nemo.

My Music

OUR FAVORITE STARS' FAVORITE RECORDS

"I'M A GOOD, CHRISTIAN, SOUTHERN GIRL."

ÜBER-PERT BROADWAY, FILM AND RECORDING STAR **KRISTIN CHENOWETH** SAYS SHE HAS A "TORTURED SOUL." A PEEK THROUGH HER CDS SHOULD REVEAL THE TRUTH.

BY RJ SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS



VINTAGE TOP AND BELT
FROM SQUARESVILLE, L.A.
JEANS BY SEVEN FOR
ALL MANKIND BRACELET
BY KIMBERLY FAITH

THE ALBUM

I SANG INTO MY HAIRBRUSH



**DONNA SUMMER
THE JOURNEY:
THE VERY BEST OF
DONNA SUMMER**

UTV, 2003

"She just goes off on 'No More Tears.' That was a big one for me because as a little kid I knew everything that Barbra Streisand did, and me and my best friend down the street would take turns with a brush—we would take turns being Donna and Barbra singing. I was the freak who was listening to Donna Summer, trying to be black. She's now dedicating her life to Christ. I say, you go, girl, as long as you're not judgmental about it."

THE ALBUM THAT

I SEE IN THE MIRROR



**DUSTY SPRINGFIELD
DUSTY IN MEMPHIS**

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1969

"Dusty—it's almost like she's speaking to you, which is always what you want. I'd love to do her life story. She was very, very insecure, she grew up a chubby kid with acne in England, and was kind of an outcast who always went home and listened to her records. I understand that. Everybody tells me, 'You seem so confident, like you have the world by a string.' But I don't care who you are—if you're a creative person, you are insecure. That's what we draw from."

THE ALBUM WITH

BALLS



**MELISSA ETHERIDGE
BREAKDOWN**

ISLAND, 1999

"Oh my God, did you see her at the Grammys? With no hair from chemo and belting out Janis Joplin like that. Sometimes when you're watching something on television, it doesn't have the impact of seeing a live performance. But this transferred all the way across the screen. Melissa has balls. She was all the way against the wall. She blew me away. My mom has battled breast cancer, and she's a great example."

THE ALBUM THAT

MAKES ME LIKE DON HENLEY



**EAGLES
THE VERY BEST OF**

WSM, 2003

"I will always love the Eagles—they were the first band I ever heard live. Don Henley is a great songwriter. The first time I heard 'Trying to get down to the heart of the matter even if you don't love me anymore,' I remember thinking, 'Oh, that's a really different kind of idea.' I thought, 'I don't get that!' But I never forgot it. And as I got older, it started to sink in. Which is probably a pretty good definition of a classic song—you don't understand it and you can't leave it behind."

THE ALBUM THAT

GOT ME THROUGH A BREAKUP



**ELLIOTT SMITH
FIGURE 8**

DREAMWORKS, 2000

"People meet me and see a petite blonde Southern comedienne. But ask any of my ex-boyfriends, and they'll tell you, 'She's a tortured soul.' And Elliott Smith, well, he was a tortured soul too. All of these songs are so theatrical, when I listen I can see all of them strung together in some sort of show. I was going through a pretty gross breakup when this record came out, and it really spoke to me. I wore that record out."

THE ALBUM TO

WARD OFF DUFF AND LOHAN



**RUFUS WAINWRIGHT
POSES**

DREAMWORKS, 2001

"We're getting fed the Hilary Duffs and Lindsay Lohans of the world—manufactured, all about the package. To me they're not the real deal. Rufus Wainwright is meat. There's a song of his, 'Cigarettes and Chocolate Milk,' about addiction and all the things that you do to get through life. I told him I wanted to cover that song. I'm a good Christian Southern girl, but we all have our addictions, and I don't think anybody puts it better than him."

THE ALBUM TO

START A HIGH-SPEED CHASE



**LENNY KRAVITZ
GREATEST HITS**

VIRGIN, 2000

"Just because I played Marian the Librarian on Broadway doesn't mean I have her taste. I'm just gonna say it—he's hot. And though I like the new songs, I really love 'American Woman.' When I heard him on TRL, and I didn't even know who he was, he was, sooo, like, *prayerful*. So wonderfully unaffected. To me what he does is gospel. And when I just want to get in the car and drive, I put this record on."

THE ALBUM THAT

TAKES ME HOME



**DOLLY PARTON
ULTIMATE DOLLY PARTON**

RCA, 2003

"I grew up in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, and was raised on country and gospel music, and I totally relate to her sound. I got the opportunity to meet her when we both sang at a Fourth of July event. She is never, ever nasty. She treats the second stage crew guy like her own family, and it's impressive. If I'm ever feeling like I don't want to be kind to people all the time, I think of her."

THE ALBUM THAT'S

LIKE, SOOOO DEEP



**INDIA.ARIE
ACOUSTIC SOUL**

MOTOWN, 2001

"The best song is 'Ready for Love.' Maybe because I feel that way. Nothing could be said more perfectly. She just wants a man and she's offering it up—she wants someone spiritual, she wants someone smart, there's no putting on anything false. I wish I could say things as eloquently as she does in that song, about being a single woman and what you want in a guy. I want for her nothing but success."

THE ALBUM THAT

EVERY EX-CHEERLEADER LOVES



**NO DOUBT
TRAGIC KINGDOM**

INTERSCOPE, 1995

"I love Gwen Stefani, everything about her. I was a cheerleader in high school and she sounds like she was too! I can see myself being friends with her. And I really love 'Don't Speak,' maybe because I'm a woman. Don't speak, I don't want to hear it, I know what you're going to say, I know where this is going There are better voices, surely, but she is an original."



ON THE EVE OF THEIR SUMMER
CO-HEADLINING TOUR, **EMINEM AND 50 CENT**
TAKE TIME OUT FROM MONOPOLIZING THE
POP CHARTS TO WAX PHILOSOPHICAL ABOUT
BEEFS OLD AND NEW AND DEBATE THE
GANGSTA CRED OF CHANGING DIAPERS.

BY SACHA JENKINS AND CHAIRMAN MAO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHERYL NIELDS

"WE'RE CRAZZY... IN A GOOD WAY!"

Eminem and 50 Cent:
Willfully disobedient
of local recycling
statutes.



SET DESIGN BY KORE SOLOMON, FIRE INSTALLATION BY DAVID JACK SHIT, JACKSON FOR BARN BURNER PRODUCTIONS, STYLING (EMINEM) BY MARC LABELLE, AND STYLING (50 CENT) BY LITE DA BARBER

EMINEM: HAT, T-SHIRT AND PENDANT SHADY LTD. PANTS NIKE JORDAN SHOES NIKE AIR MAX CLASSIC
50 CENT: T-SHIRT, JEANS AND BOOTS G-UNIT CLOTHING

WHEN you learn you'll be eating lunch with two of music's biggest stars, it's hard not to fantasize about the menu. Filet mignon? Lobster Newburg? Some shrimp, at least? None of the above, *Blender* learns, if the stars in question are Eminem and 50 Cent—with these two, you'd better buckle up for some serious Taco Bell. "I've heard," deadpans Eminem, "that Taco Bell is the healthiest of all the fast-food chains."

We step into the back lounge of a Detroit photo studio to discover Marshall Mathers, 32, and Curtis Jackson, 28, chatting loudly over refried beans and \$3.29 chicken fajitas—like two teenagers taking a snack break from the PlayStation 2 in their parents' basement. *Blender* should have anticipated this. Eminem's 4-million-selling fifth album, *Encore*, offset fleeting moments of gravity with adolescent poop talk; 50 Cent—whose second album, *The Massacre*, sold 1.15 million copies its first week out—recently devoted a lyric to dissing "bourgeois-ass bitches." He's not exactly the caviar type, either.

The unbuttoned vibe suits today's agenda: Eminem and 50 have joined up for an exclusive, no-holds-barred roundtable with *Blender*. During our two-hour conversation, Eminem is calm and reflective, describing the sober pleasures of life as a diaper-changing family man; 50, by contrast, is amped up and excitable as he discusses Hollywood groupie-bonking and his now-squashed feud with the Game. There's also a momentous summer tour to plug: For the first time ever, Eminem and 50 Cent are hitting the road together. "We don't got a name, we just know we're touring," says Eminem. Bullet-proof beach balls will be on sale ...

Let's start off with you, 50.

EMINEM What the fuck am I? Chopped liver?

So, 50, your motto was "get rich or die trying." Then you sold 11 million records. Now you're filthy rich!

50 CENT Yeah. Now it's "Get richer or die trying." [laughs]

But you're still fucking with people. On "Like Toy Soldiers," Eminem talks about being ready to leave past beefs behind. But your new album has a dis song, "Piggy Bank," and you also had it out with your labelmate, Game. Are you obsessed with the "die trying" part?

50 CENT I listened to Em's song and I enjoyed it, but in my heart, I didn't feel it was realistic. I respond to other people's actions. If I didn't write about what bothers me, I wouldn't know what to write about. And "Piggy Bank" is factual. When I mention Jadakiss, I say that he's local. But he even says it on his record "Why?"—his one good record: "Why my buzz in L.A. ain't what it is in New York?" I mention that Nas tattooed Kelis on his arm. Check his arm. Fat Joe—I sold 11 million and his record didn't do well. Everything on my song is fact.

Em, does this put you in a weird position, since you're cool with Fat Joe and Nas?

EMINEM 50's his own man. I can't stop him from talking about anyone, the same way he can't really stop me. We've had talks about "Piggy Bank." But I'm not gonna censor him. If anybody in the Shady/Aftermath family feels strong enough about a situation, then who am I to stop what they feel? And nine times out of 10, I agree with everything that everybody does on this label.

50 CENT People look at me like I'm bugged out. Like, "He don't care, he just like the trouble." I'll say this: The kid in the schoolyard who doesn't want to fight always leaves with a black eye. That's my life. If you're afraid, you get hurt. You get moved out of the way. You're a victim. So I just move full speed ahead, and when the garbage comes, whatever. I'll ride through it. I've been through a lot.

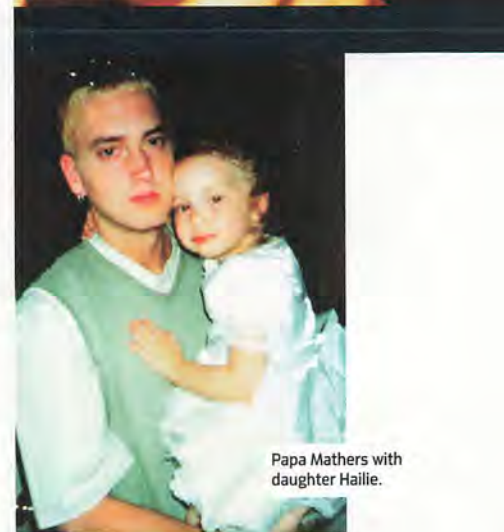
EMINEM So, 50's crazy ...

50 CENT Everybody knows that. There's only three people who can call me crazy: Eminem, Dr. Dre and my grandmother.

You both come from humble beginnings. Is success all you imagined it to be?



"Learned this one at the PTA meeting."



Papa Mathers with daughter Hailie.

50 CENT It's more than I imagined.

That's the opposite of what stars usually say. Can you explain?

50 CENT Success feels great. I talk tough, but let me tell you what I'm scared of. I'm afraid of not being successful. I like the way success feels so much that I'll do whatever I have to in order to move to the next level. I remember when I was the only one who believed in myself. I had to run on my own energy. At times even my grandmother didn't believe I would make it. I am a little crazy, 'cause once my mind is set I can stay there, in that zone. Persistence is what allowed my success to happen. After I got shot, I got dropped from Columbia Records. I was sitting around, bugging. But I healed back up, and I did what I had to

"THERE'S ONLY THREE PEOPLE WHO CAN CALL ME CRAZY:

EMINEM, DR. DRE

AND MY GRANDMOTHER."

50 CENT

50's car-detailing business was less than successful.



ALL CLOTHING G-UNIT

do. This is meant to happen for me.

Now other rappers get shot and it's an integral part of their marketing plan.

50 CENT You know what? Tell your new artist to go get shot for marketing. His ass will fucking die out there. This is not fucking marketing. This is the harsh reality. This shit goes on in that environment. How common is it that someone's shot in the 'hood?

Pretty common.

50 CENT That's what I'm saying. So it's like, when you come from it, you're writing from your own experiences. I'll make a record like "I'm High All the Time." Now, I don't use drugs myself, but I wrote that song because I know there's 500,000 people that consistently buy records that don't wanna do nothing but get high while they hear it.

Em, your time as a substance-abuser has been well chronicled. Are you on the same track as 50 right now?

50 CENT In other words, are you fucking high when you go home?

EMINEM Yeah, I light up a blunt and go, "Hailie, get your pajamas on!" [mock inhales] Nah, man, I'm in daddy mode. I used to get frustrated being on tour weeks at a time and not getting to see her. But now, it's financially possible for me to tour for three, four days a week, then go home for three days.

50 CENT But I'm gonna keep going when he heads back home!

Here you are, the two biggest stars in hip-hop—and not only are you collaborators and business partners, but you've also cultivated a friendship. How often do you talk and hang out?

EMINEM We speak more than we hang out, because we're both in different places. I'll be in the studio, he'll be doing a show, but we always got that open line of communication.

50 CENT The only time you can't speak to Em is when he's making a record. Then he shuts down—everything goes away, nobody can get to him until he's done. Then it opens up to Dr. Dre, and I can pop in.

Do you critique each other's work?

50 CENT Some ideas Em and Dre like better than other ones. I made a record, "P.I.M.P. Part II." I noticed Dre wasn't excited about it, so I took it off. What you hear from my album is really 50 Cent up to Eminem and Dr. Dre standards.

The two of you are open about the fact that your relationships with your fathers were pretty much nonexistent. Has Dre served as a quasi-father figure to you?

EMINEM I wouldn't say father figure. Dre's not *that* old. But he's definitely been a mentor. I've talked many times about all the shit I learned from Dre, from a business standpoint, making beats, patience—sitting in a studio and working till you get it right.

50 CENT I learned a lot from Dre and Marshall. It's easy to get a big head when you do as well as I did on my first album, selling 11 million records. What keeps me level is that Em sold 18 million on his last LP. Dr. Dre's consistency minimizes my accomplishments to the point that it's like my success is this big [squeezes fingers] →

together]. It's tiny.

EMINEM You'll get there one day. Just keep trying.

Em, your focus seems to have turned homeward lately. Your video for "Mockingbird," the song dedicated to your daughter, uses home video of your family. When you showed it on *TRL*, you even got a little choked up.

EMINEM By putting home-movie footage in the video, I think I laid it all on the table for anyone who didn't understand my relationship with Kim. Or my relationship with my daughter and how important that is, and why I adopted my niece. You can

"He's yours. Put him to sleep, warm his bottles." And I still take care of him. He's 19 now, but he lives with me—he's under my roof, I bought him a truck, I put him on allowance. I don't treat him like a kid, but in a sense he still is a kid to me, because I watched him get taken away by the state and bounced around through foster homes. I always said that if I ever had enough money, I would take him from my mother. And I did. I held up my end of the bargain.

50, what impression has Em's autobiographical songwriting made on you?

50 CENT I analyze Marshall. I try to figure

don't know to what extent she was a lesbian. I did see something that was a little awkward. Different. I was 8 years old when my mama passed, so how much information would I have about that, honestly?

Do you plan to reveal more about your life in your songs?

50 CENT Absolutely. Kids growing up in the middle of a hardcore situation, with two females as their parents, they'll identify with that line and it'll make them feel special. In a lot of ways, my situation is inspiring. 'Cause I'm from the bottom. Marshall's from the bottom too. Want to know why I wear jewelry in photo shoots? It symbolizes success where I'm from.

Are you interested in settling down, becoming more of a family man?

50 CENT Not yet. I'm still moving uphill. I haven't peaked. I'm excited—I enjoy the traveling, I enjoy the pace. My son's important to me, but I tour 200 shows in 365 days.

Is it hard to be away from your son so much?

50 CENT Well, he has his mom all the time, and he gets a chance to have everything provided for him. He has all the things that I didn't have coming up. I keep him sheltered a little bit, try to keep him away from, you know ... He's already been exposed to more than the average kid his age has ever seen. He was actually in the house when—he heard me get shot, but he didn't see it.

Em, now that you're so grown up, have you given 50 any anger-management tips?

EMINEM I remember having a talk with him before his first album. I said, You're about to be big—I don't know how big, but you're about to be big, things are about to start moving very quickly. I told him, You don't have to do anything else at this point to verify your background,

where you come from, your story. You don't have to walk around and punch people in the face, you don't gotta shoot nobody. All you gotta do is concentrate on the music. Stay outta trouble, stay outta jail. You can't make music from jail.

So 50, why didn't you follow this advice with regard to Game? Is it because you're, you know ... crazy?

50 CENT You know, Game's success happened a little fast. The people surrounding him encouraged him in a wrong way. But it's nothing that can't be resolved. I don't resent him to the point where it can't be fixed. Now with Ja Rule, I wouldn't sit

"I GET CHOKED UP EVERY TIME I SEE THE 'MOCKINGBIRD' VIDEO." **EMINEM**

see them in the video, side by side since they were babies—how they grew up together. And yeah, I got a little choked up. I get choked up every time I see the video. I don't think I'll ever make a video that will top "Mockingbird."

I'm more grounded than I was four years ago. But nothing I ever did stopped me from being a father and loving my daughter. And then, when I got in a good position financially, I took my niece and got her out of the situation that she was in, bouncing back and forth from house to house, just like I did with my brother.

Tell us about your younger brother.

EMINEM When I was 12 years old, I was forced to be a father to him—changing his shitty diapers, that whole thing. My mother would go to bingo, and be like,

out why he has a connection with so many people. It's because his issues are family-oriented, and everybody has that in some way—whether they don't have a family, or they have some problem within their family.

Now me, I've stayed away from my personal life; my music's been more about what goes in the environment I came up in. I tried to be a little more personal on "Hate It or Love It," the Game track I'm featured on from his album.

On a verse from that song, you talk about your mother being a lesbian.

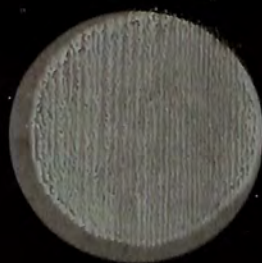
50 CENT I talk about my moms *kissing a girl*. If she was a lesbian then I wouldn't exist. Really, I





THE NEW LONGER LASTING AXE EFFECT.

SCRATCH HERE



Po

PLAYAS ONLY

Content is of a mature and extremely arousing nature and may contain images of saucy coeds, sexy stewardesses and other hotties. This software may be deemed unfit for some minors, spinsters, parents, happily married couples, or anyone residing in regions where caning is still practiced.



**THE NEW LONGER LASTING
AXE EFFECT.**



down with him even if he brought Minister Farrakhan to make the peace. It's beyond that. There's just nothing to talk about. But I liked Game enough to do the things that I did for his CD.

So you're open to making peace with Game?

50 CENT Absolutely. You know who loses in the end if there's a conflict? Me. He's signed to my label. It's me versus me. It's not good for me, the entire thing.

All right, let's talk about something that's good for you, 50. On your new album you boast that you've made love to several unnamed famous actresses in Hollywood.

50 CENT Don't you think it's possible that I could sleep with them women?

Sure, why not?

50 CENT Are you trying to stop me from getting action? What do you want from me? Names? Telephone numbers? Addresses?

Names would be enough. Or maybe a video. You also say in one song that you were "on to something" when you dated Vivica Fox. What happened?

50 CENT Didn't I answer that on the song? I said, "Then it was nothing." But you had to ask that, 'cause you wanna put Vivica in the article. You like Vivica. Tell the truth. You wanna kiss Vivica.

EMINEM I wanna kiss Vivica.

What about you, Mr. Mathers? You're still on the single grind?

EMINEM I'm up and down, back and forth. We all know my situation with Kim. It's back and forth—it's been the story of my life since I was 16 years old.

50 CENT [smiles] They love each other.

50, you criticized Nas for getting the likeness of his wife tattooed on his arm, and Em has Kim's name tattooed on himself. Is that something you would never do?

50 CENT [points to his various tattoos] For my moms. For my son. For my grandmother.

But not for that special woman—Mrs. 50 Cent—that you might meet one day?

50 CENT I'll put a ring on. Yo, how many people you know who are divorced? Forever my moms will be the woman who gave birth to me, forever my son will be my child, forever my grandmother will be the woman who took care of me when I couldn't take care of myself.

Let's talk about physical-fitness regimens. Obviously, 50, you're like Robocop, you're diesel.

50 CENT Yeah. I work out. That's why I endorse vitamin water as opposed to doing an alcoholic beverage.

And Eminem seems to be working out now too. Can we chalk that up to your influence?

50 CENT I kinda got him started. We were



in the studio and I told him, There's four things that make a star: quality of material, performance, appearance and personality. Em's got material that's on such a high level, and he's got his performance—he's got that locked. Personality, they already bought into him, he's Em. So the only thing he can do to expand his situation is to change his physical condition. And he started working out. He can box now. If he beats the shit out of somebody in a fight, now they gonna say it's my fault. [laughs]

Sure. You're the crazy one. What about fears? If 50 fears not having success, Em, is there anything you fear?

EMINEM I fear success spinning out of control for me, where I can't balance it. If I'm spending too much time away from my kids, then I gotta slow it down. At this point in my life, financial success comes second. I already have that taken care of. My niece, my daughter, my little brother, Kim, everyone is set. Proof [of D12] is set. Everybody that's ever been a part of my life and close to my family is set.

Anything else you want to say about your tourmate?

50 CENT He's gonna say I'm crazy.

EMINEM I already said that about you.

50 CENT That's OK. Crazy's unpredictable, and unpredictable's entertainment.

EMINEM People used to say I was crazy. To an extent, maybe I am.

50 CENT Maybe we're two crazy people who know it.

EMINEM I think crazy people are in denial, and we're not.

50 CENT We're good crazy.

EMINEM Yeah. Crazy in a good way. [BLENDER]

Sacha Jenkins and Chairman Mao are two of the authors of *ego trip's* *Big Book of Racism!*, in bookstores now.

EBONY AND IVORY

EM AND 50 AREN'T THE ONLY MIXED-RACE TANDEM TO BREACH OUR NATION'S COLOR DIVIDE ...

SONNY CROCKETT AND RICARDO TUBBS

CLAIM TO FAME *Miami Vice* detectives from 1984 to 1989

CONTRIBUTION TO RACIAL HARMONY Against all odds, managed to make both coke busts and pastel espadrilles appear stylish.

OTHELLO AND DESDEMONA

CLAIM TO FAME Shakespeare's original sufferers of jungle fever

CONTRIBUTION TO RACIAL HARMONY By packing his drama *Othello* with interracial marriage, murder and lurid scandal, the bard presaged O.J. Simpson by 400 years.

CAPT. KIRK AND LT. UHURA

CLAIM TO FAME Shipmates on the original *Star Trek*

CONTRIBUTION TO RACIAL HARMONY Provided American television with its first interracial kiss. Ask your basement-dwelling neighbor for the name of the episode.

GENE WILDER AND RICHARD PRYOR

CLAIM TO FAME Classic screen duo, starring in four movies together, including 1980's hilarious *Stir Crazy* and 1991's considerably less hilarious *Another You*

CONTRIBUTION TO RACIAL HARMONY Wilder's "We bad!" in 1976's *Silver Streak* was comedy's definitive blackface scene. Well, until ...

TED DANSON AND WHOOP! GOLDBERG

CLAIM TO FAME TV barkeep and dreadlocked future center square who dated from 1992 to 1993

CONTRIBUTION TO RACIAL HARMONY At a Friars Club roast in 1993, Danson attempted to gently lampoon the media attention paid to his relationship by appearing in full Al Jolson blackface. The attempt failed.

FLAVOR FLAV AND BRIGITTE NIELSEN

CLAIM TO FAME Diminutive Public Enemy rapper and colossal Danish C-list actress whose *Surreal Life* romance was, we're certain, not a fabrication of VH1 programming executives.

CONTRIBUTION TO RACIAL HARMONY By bum-rushing the stage at a 2004 PE show to smooch her paramour, 'Gitte said more about how dumb Whitey is than Chuck D's lyrics ever could.

STEVE KANDELL



TED NUGENT
CLASSIC ZEBRA HAT
\$14.99

MADE
JERSEY
\$40

ROCAWEAR
SOLID POLO IN SUNSHINE
\$48

50 CENT
VITAMIN WATER
\$1.99

ELVIS PRESLEY
WRIST CUFF
\$29.95

FAMOUS STARS
AND STRAPS
HUSTLER BELT
\$39.99

DMX DOG GEAR
CAMOUFLAGE JACKET
\$39.99

BOB DYLAN
BELT BUCKLE
\$25

SEAN JOHN
SUIT
\$446

ROCAWEAR
PRO-KEDS COOL OUT
\$80

MERCHANDISE



THESE DAYS, POP STARS HAVE THEIR OWN CLOTHING LINES, ENERGY DRINKS AND EVEN "CRUNK-ASS PORN." BUT IS IT POSSIBLE TO SURVIVE A WEEK USING NOTHING BUT MUSICIAN-ENDORSED PRODUCTS? LET'S SEE!

BY CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAGHI NADERZAD

"I'VE BEEN DRINKING this new cocktail called the Swollen Pussy," confides Lil Jon. "It's a combination of Crunk!!! and Hpnotiq. It's called the Swollen Pussy because ... it's pink!"

Crunk!!! is Lil Jon's energy drink, an entire case of which is on a table within easy reach of where the rapper/entrepreneur stands backstage at MTV's Manhattan studios. Lil Jon is here this afternoon to appear on the TRL Awards. Blender is here to quiz Jon about his beverage and, in particular, whether it is possible, as I am coming to believe, to consume a lethal dose.

"Well, after a six-pack, you might be too wired," he advises. "You ain't going to be able to go to sleep."

This may be a problem. A few weeks ago the question had been raised in the *Blender* office whether there were now so many pop-star-endorsed beverages, clothing lines, videogames, cookbooks and other assorted merchandise that it would be possible to survive an entire week using just those products. I have been conscripted to find out. This is Day No. 1 of the experiment.

To get into the swing of things, I have decided to see how many cans of Crunk!!! can be consumed in a single 24-hour period. This morning, an even dozen had seemed like an achievable target. Now that appears extremely optimistic as, after just three cans, my brain synapses are firing at such a pace that it is nearly impossible to concentrate on what Jon is saying. Although what he appears to be saying is that I should stop drinking Crunk!!!

"Twelve—that's too much," warns the

genuinely concerned rapper. "Twelve? That would make your heart explode!"



WITHIN JUST A couple of years of Elvis Presley's scoring his first hit, 1954's "That's All Right," there were bubblegum cards, dolls and cosmetics on sale bearing the King's likeness. Rock & roll merchandising is almost as old as rock & roll itself and, indeed, without it, some of your favorite bands might never have existed.

According to Blink-182's Mark Hoppus, "When we first started, we weren't selling enough records to support ourselves. We were entirely supported by selling Blink T-shirts out on the road. And that's how a lot of bands work. It's the T-shirts that get them by."

But the past few years have seen a quantum leap in both the quantity of musician-related merchandise and the amount of lucre musicians are making from their products. 50 Cent and G-Unit, Jennifer

Lopez, P. Diddy, Pharrell Williams, Eve, Good Charlotte, Hilary Duff, Queen Latifah and Ice-T all have their own clothing companies. Between them the members of Blink-182 now operate two apparel companies and one shoe company. Rocawear, the clothing business set up by Jay-Z and Damon Dash, claims annual sales in the region of \$300 million, an amount similar to that raked in by the JLO by Jennifer Lopez brand and P. Diddy's Sean John company. In the next five years, Britney Spears's fragrance and beauty line, Curious, could earn her up to \$20 million, which should keep Kevin Federline in wifebeaters for a while. Then again, he and Britney are planning to create their own his-and-hers clothing company, called Pair a Dice. Christina Aguilera recently slammed such celebrity-endorsed clothes as "tacky"—unlike, presumably, celebrity-endorsed perfumes such as her own only-available-abroad Xpose. In addition to his energy drink, Lil Jon has signed a deal with porn company Vivid to host two hardcore films featuring "fun, hot sex and crunk-ass parties." And more than a quarter of a century after the King's death, Elvis Presley Enterprises is still very much taking care of business, offering an astonishing range of Pelv-oriented items, including a Blue Suede Shoes Pet Treat Jar and the King of Rock & Roll Model Stock Car.

In fact, after returning to my office and inspecting the massive pile of product that has been gathered together for my mer- →

★ MERCHANDISE ME!

chandise odyssey, it is hard to think of many things that rock stars won't sell, as I sift through the Sum 41 neckties, Bob Dylan baseballs, DMX dog outfits and Tenacious D "cum rags." (FYI: While the first three items will be tested in the ensuing week, the last will not.)

This rush by acts to extend their brands into nonmusical areas results from a combination of factors, including the fact that today's hip-hop stars tend to regard themselves as businessmen as much as they do performers. Indeed, some of them, such as 50 Cent, were actual salesmen in an earlier life, albeit, in his case, of narcotics rather than apparel.

"We understand that you only have a certain amount of time to do what you can do," Lil Jon told me. "I'm trying to make as much money as I can while I'm popular, so I can just stack it up. If Michael Jordan can sell shoes, why can't Jay-Z? Why can't G-Unit?"

With the record industry itself in seemingly terminal decline, acts of all musical hues have become increasingly interested in exploring other possible revenue streams.

"IF MICHAEL JORDAN CAN SELL SHOES, WHY CAN'T G-UNIT?" LIL JON

"There used to be so much revenue generated from record sales that merchandise was an afterthought," says Jeffrey Bischoff, whose company, Cinderblock, makes rock & roll tchotchkes for more than 300 acts. "But now, with all the problems the record industry is having, merchandise is becoming more and more financially important for artists."

Whether a thirtysomething rock hack can get away with wearing said merch, however, is a very different question. When I dress from head to toe in Good Charlotte's "Made" line, for example, a fellow editor suggests that, while the outfit looks good, it would "look better on a person who was younger, thinner or, you know, someone else, basically." Further embarrassment comes when, on the way home, I stop in at a Foot Locker and ask if they have any of Jay-Z's S. Carter sneakers. "Sure" replies the young clerk. "What size does your son take?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AT THE END of Day No. 1, I go to bed feeling very old and very hungry. Pop stars may pretty much stand in line to endorse things to drink, from vitamin water (50 Cent) to tequila (Sammy Hagar) to Bacardi (Fat Joe) to mineral water (George Jones) to energy drinks (in addition to Lil Jon's Crunk!!!, Nelly also has Pimp Juice). But there is precious little in the way of musician-approved



Pouty: Jessica Simpson sells Dessert Treats.



Blingy: Jay-Z promotes S. Carter.



Smelly: Britney hawks Curious perfume.

edibles. The principal exception is Linda McCartney's range of vegetarian meals. ("Wholesome. All natural. Delicious.") Unfortunately, while they may well be wholesome and natural, the late Wings keyboardist's meals are somewhat patchy on the delicious front. On the one hand, the cheese enchiladas with Mexican-style corn risotto I have for lunch on Day No. 2 is a tastebud fiesta. But, on the other, the butternut squash ravioli I have for dinner tastes like dog ears stuffed with cheesy glue.

Actually, "Dog Ears Stuffed with Cheesy Glue" sounds like a recipe from Ted Nugent's cookbook, *Kill It & Grill It*. Certainly, it wouldn't look that out of place

their proprietors. Moby's TeaNY restaurant is a quiet, vegetarian joint that offers potato salad "just like how mama made it, but vegan!" Jay-Z's 40/40 Club proves to be an exercise in sports-bar bling, complete with cigar lounge, sugary-sweet cocktails and TV screens in its unisex restrooms. Sean



ALSO APPROVED FOR PURCHASE: JIMMY BUFFET-ENDORSED GOLF BAGS, FURNITURE AND COCONUT-SHELL BIKINI TOPS.

Combs's soul food restaurant Justin's is a swankier establishment but with a breath-takingly self-referential range of dishes, including P. Diddy Jumbo Fried Shrimp.

Alas, New York has not been considered a suitable locale for one of Jimmy Buffet's chain of Caribbean-themed Margaritaville restaurants. So, instead of enjoying a cheeseburger in paradise, I spend most of Day No. 5 reading a collection of his short stories, *Tales From Margaritaville*. While I can see the appeal of his drinkin'-and-fishin' tales, they are much too mild-mannered for my taste. After finishing the last of the stories, I feel obliged to see go out and see the Ja Rule-starring bulletfest *Assault on Precinct 13* and then spend half the night beating the crap out of Ludacris and assorted other rappers in the *Def Jam: Fight for NY* videogame. As for Buffet's bucolic yarns, I decide to get a little more hardcore about this surviving-only-on-merch deal, and start using them as toilet paper.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHILE IT MUST be nice for Jay-Z to have his own bar, whatever profit he might make from the 40/40 Club is dwarfed by that which comes from his S. Carter shoes. The most successful non-athlete-endorsed sneaker in history, the S. Carter is now a \$100 million business and continues to expand (in the course of my schrag week it is announced that a new sneaker, the S. Carter Basketball Mid, is to join the S. Carter, the S. Carter II and the S. Carter Tennis).

The man who brokered the deal between Jay-Z and Reebok, the company responsible for manufacturing the S. Carter, is Steve →



"It's Atkins-approved, OK?"

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Sauza
TEQUILA

NOTHING TO HIDE.

Stoute. Formerly a vice president at Interscope Records, Stoute is now probably the most important matchmaker between music stars and corporate America. It was Stoute, for example, who put together the 2003 deal that found Justin Timberlake promoting McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It" slogan for a reported \$6 million fee. But Stoute has no doubt that the big bucks are to be made in music stars' selling their own goods.

"There's no money in appearing in an ad for another company—maybe half a million dollars," he sniffs. "The real money is in creating and partnering and product development. And the days when an artist damaged his credibility because he hawked a product are over."

Yet, even nowadays, there are a handful of holdouts who still believe that associating themselves with a corporation can be soul-damaging. "My songs were not written to sell SUVs—it's that simple," says former Dead Kennedys frontman Jello Biafra, who sued his bandmates after, he says, they considered leasing one of the band's songs for use in a jeans commercial. "I hate to see people who are all too eager to let themselves be used as puppets to help the ongoing corporate coup of our nation and culture."

Biafra's words make me pause before taking another bite of commemorative Elvis chocolate and shift uncomfortably in my



BEFORE HER DEATH,
LINDA MCCARTNEY
HELPED INVENT THE
'VEGETARIAN' FISHCAKE.

seat, although the latter may be due to the fact that I'm wearing Good Charlotte panties. But I put his broadside to the back of my mind and challenge my roommate to a game of KISSopoly ("The game that lets you rock and roll all night!") and beat him soundly. My roommate blames his loss on my having "luckily" landed on the game's equivalents of Park Place and Boardwalk.

I, however, lean toward the belief that victory is a result of the increased brain activity stimulated by the contents of the many empty Crunk!!! cans that litter the floor. Having survived the first day's waves of lightheadedness and nausea, I have become a complete convert to the brew ("With Ashwaganda," the label boasts cryptically) and increasingly find myself concerned not about its toxic properties but its addictive ones.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ON THE EVENING of Day No. 7, I conclude merch week in style by putting together a three-course dinner for my roommate and his girlfriend: Linda McCartney risotto, Ted Nugent buffalo steaks and, for dessert, Ben

LICENSE TO SHILL!

THREE OF THESE FREAKISH CELEBRITY PRODUCTS ARE REAL—AND ONE WE MADE UP. BUT WHICH IS WHICH?



FAKE

REAL



STEVEN SEAGAL DIAMOND LOTUS RANCH ESSENTIAL OILS

When not being out-acted by rappers in lame action movies, Steven Seagal likes nothing better than to distill essential oils at his Northern California ranch. Available in thyme, oregano and peppermint, which, unlike Seagal's filmography, "can be stimulating to a tired brain."



KISS KASKET

"I love livin', but this makes the alternative look pretty damn good!" declared extravagantly tongued Kiss bassist Gene Simmons in 2001 while hyping his band's latest piece of merchandise: a coffin. Although the \$4,500 price tag might have seemed steep, the Kasket did boast a "specially laminated photomural"—and doubled as a beer cooler!



OLSEN TWINS CONJOINED DOLL

Officially marketed to "promote awareness of conjoined-twin syndrome," this toy featured Mary-Kate and Ashley attached at the hip by a thin strip of plastic. Removed from shelves just hours after the product's launch in 2001; a mint-condition conjoined doll recently sold on eBay for \$800.



JOEY PANTOLIANO OPTICAL FRAMES

How many times have you thought, "Hey, I'd really like some glasses designed by that bald guy from the first *Matrix* movie"? That's right: never! But if you had, then that wish would be amply fulfilled by Joey Pants' signature line of eyewear. **CLARK COLLIS**

SADLY, THE OLSEN TWINS CONJOINED DOLL IS NOT A REAL PRODUCT, YET.

& Jerry's Cherry Garcia ice cream. The meal is such a success that, by the time my tardy third guest, a poker buddy named Paul, finally arrives, everything has been eaten.

Disappointed, he zeroes in on a can of Jessica Simpson Dessert Treats. A hugely successful range of cosmetics, with sales in excess of \$60 million since their launch at the start of last year, the Desserts are described on the front of the can as "deliciously lickable." But the small print on the back warns, "Sold as novelty only—this is not a food item." Sadly, by the time I point this

out, Paul has already thrust the nozzle into his mouth and, Homer Simpson-style, evacuated a stream of scented goo directly down his gullet.

"I'm a little apprehensive," he says, after being informed that the "Dessert" is not, in fact, for human consumption. "I just hope I don't get diarrhea."

The experiment is finally over. But what have we learned? Well, following a call to Paul the next day, I learn that excess consumption of Dessert Treats may well cause not just diarrhea, but possibly an enlarged spleen. I've also discovered that it is possible to live for a week on rock-star merchandise—as long as you don't mind being laughed at by clerks, wearing a lot of oversized black T-shirts and, if white, being given the worst table at a certain hip-hop star's half-empty establishment.

But the real revelation is that, having become attuned to music merch, I now see it everywhere, from the Jay-Z/Reebok billboard just a couple of blocks from my apartment to the Jimmy Buffet license plate on the car right outside my front door. I feel a desperate need to detox, to use a mouse pad that doesn't feature a representation of the Grateful Dead's *Terrapin Station* CD, to pour salt from a shaker that isn't shaped like members of the Beatles, to clad myself in underwear not designed for 15-year-old female Good Charlotte fans.

And that's what I'm going to do. I really am. Just as soon as I've finished this last can of Crunk!!! **[BLENDER]**



P. Diddy: "Buy Sean John or the mannequin gets it!"



New Stuff



KING LS. AVAILABLE AT THE PUMA STORE AND SELECT RETAILERS. BEES NOT INCLUDED.

Like a

Virgin

BY NICK DUERDEN ★ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS



WHAT'S THIS? CRUNK&B PRINCESS **CIARA** HATES
DRINKING, HATES SMOKING AND LOVES ... ABSTINENCE?
DON'T WORRY: LIKE MOST TEEN QUEENS, SHE'S
NOT THAT INNOCENT.

Ciara takes a breather
from world domination,
February 25, Los Angeles.



JACKET AND SAFETY PIN BY
HYSTERIC GLAMOUR NECKLACE
AND BRACELETS BY SOHO
ENAMEL DIAMOND RING BY
ERICA COURTNEY, L.A. DRAGON
RING BY ROSALINA INC. FROM
NEIMAN MARCUS

B

REEZING into the hotel lobby a good 90 minutes late, and trailed by two of her minions, Ciara Harris, cell-phone glued reliably to her ear, approaches *Blender* with a cursory hug, then, with the crook of her finger, bids us to follow. A VIP room has been secured for our chat, and so off she glides in its general direction, with the confident swagger of an emergent superstar. The call she's on doesn't sound like a particularly welcome one.

"Well, make sure it happens," she shouts into the mouthpiece before abruptly hanging up.

Today, in the permanently chaotic schedule that is Ciara's working life, is a rehearsal day. She is here in Los Angeles to perfect the dance routines for her singles "Goodies" and "I, 2 Step," which she will perform at the Soul Train Music Awards, an occasion that will also bestow upon her the title of Entertainer of the Year. For a 19-year-old whose debut album, also called *Goodies*, has been out barely six months, this is no small achievement.

"I'm blessed," she says, radiating happiness and looking quite serene. But her serenity will later be blown to smithereens, and it will be the unwitting fault of *Blender*.

En route to the rehearsal studio, in grid-

locked traffic that is already making her agitated, we innocently ask whether the upcoming ceremony will be a cause for nerves. Bad move.

"Don't ask me that!" she snaps. "And don't use that word around me—*nervous*. I hate it!" The exaggerated pout that follows makes it difficult to know whether she is serious or not. Her subsequent actions leave little doubt. "I wasn't nervous, no. Not until you asked me, anyway."

And with that, she stealthily ignores *Blender* for the rest of the evening.

But all this awkwardness is yet to come. Right now, we are still in the hotel, and she is still purringly content. She is also quite magnificently self-possessed, requesting a glass of water to be poured and ordering the

door to be closed with the air of one for whom everything, these days, is taken care of. But then, as her father, Carlton Harris, later informs us, Ciara has always had a penchant for being waited upon.

"She always told me, 'Daddy, I want a maid to do everything for me,'" he says. His smile is a broad one. "Seems like it's coming true, huh?"

With a platinum album already under her belt, and the general assumption that she is the best thing to happen to R&B since Aaliyah, Ciara is indeed a fledgling diva. And she has a diva's precocity, to boot.

"I believe I was placed in front of millions of people for a reason," she says, Cleopatra eyes peeking beneath the wide brim of her John Deere baseball cap. "People look up to me, they see me as their role model, and that's cool. I've been a role model all my life."

Evidently, she has much faith in her own abilities.

"I guess I do," she shrugs.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHEN THE SINGLE "Goodies" arrived in the fall of last year, it was clear that Ciara was markedly different from her peers. This magnificent slab of sci-fi crunk clearly came from another planet. Setting sultry R&B to a synth just shy of a dog whistle, it wasn't just unusual musically but lyrically as well. In a genre dominated by sex—its chief overlord, Lil Jon, is not just a music producer but now also a producer of porn—the song's assertion that Ciara's "goodies" stay "in the jar" effectively established her as crunk's answer to Hilary Duff.



BRACELETS BY STEPHEN WEBSTER FROM MAXFIELD, L.A.
RING BY ROSALINA INC. AT NEIMAN MARCUS

NO GUT, NO GLORY

Think you know your favorite artist's body of work? Match the famous pop star with his or her equally famous abs.



1



2



3



4



5

BIZ MARKIE

CIARA

GWEN
STEFANI

USHER

JANET
JACKSON

1: Gwen Stefani; 2: Usher; 3: Janet Jackson; 4: Ciara; 5: Biz Markie

CIARA: JUSTIN STEPHENS; CAT FROM BOONE'S ANIMALS; ABS: 1 & 2: FRANK LOTTER (LANGE)/CONTOUR PHOTOS; 3: SARA DE BOER (REYNALTO); 5: MICHAEL SCHREIBER (REYNALTO)

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battery-powered motor.



Micro-pulses raise the
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blades can shave closer.

"So you think I'm Little Miss Innocent, do you?" she says, smiling uncertainly. "You know what I've learned in the past few months of public life? That too many people want to delve too deeply into my private life."

But, *Blender* argues, the fan base she so wishes to lead by example may well look to her for guidance in such matters.

"Well, OK, what can I say? I'm not totally innocent, and I do date. But as a young woman, I also demand respect and I strongly believe in ... in abstinence. Sex before marriage—it's not right."

Ciara is not married, which therefore means ...

"Think whatever you want," she says, now laughing coquettishly. "But my beliefs are founded upon religion and a very strict sense of morality. It's the way I was brought up."

The only child of military parents, Ciara Princess Harris was born in Austin, Texas, in 1986, and spent the first eight years of her life on military bases across America and Germany, before the family finally settled in Atlanta. By the time she became a teenager, she was excelling in, well, in everything.

"I was very popular at school," she says, "and I always did well. I was a cheerleader, I ran track, I made Varsity at 13. I got on with the teachers, I was cool with my homeboys, everybody wanted to know me."

Here, she stops to consider something. Her index finger taps her lower lip, and she slowly nods her head.

"You know what? Being popular at school was the perfect preparation for fame, because they are both pretty similar. I guess I'm used to being the center of attention."

At 15, and by now practically omnipo-



Ciara, Missy Elliott and dates, Miami, December 2004.



Prom night, 2003: Have her home by midnight.

don't always go the way you want in life, and they haven't for me, either. I have plenty of insecurities, but I'm a survivor. I've lived a lot of life, and not just mine—vicariously, as well."

When pressed, she provides examples: The friend who became pregnant at 13; the family member she lost to alcoholism.

"Not dead," she says, "we just don't know where she is. Drugs and stuff, so it was pretty serious. But these are the things you learn from, grow strong from."

"I HAVE PLENTY OF INSECURITIES, BUT I'M A SURVIVOR."

tent, she became part of an all-female three-piece called Hear Say, but after six months of ego clashes, the band broke up, and so Ciara spent the next three years finishing school while writing songs for artists like Blu Cantrell and Mya. At 18 she was introduced to Lil Jon, and the producer was immediately convinced he'd discovered the female Usher. Within a year, she was at the top of the *Billboard* charts.

"But that doesn't mean life has always been easy for me," she says, cap off and now frowning. "I don't really want to speak too much on personal stuff, but things

Perhaps, then, it is hardly surprising to learn that this young woman, still a teenager, is mature beyond her years and, just possibly, somewhat over-cautious. Discuss with her the antics of, say, Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan, and Ciara will curl her lip with something resembling disgust.

"I hate drinking, I hate smoking and I don't much like to party," she says.

And then she says this:

"I don't have many friends, either. When you're famous, it's difficult to trust new people. But then, for me, it always has been. It's hard to tell who is good and who

is bad. I'm always, 'Can I trust this person? Will they steal from me?'" she asks, as if this were the most natural question in the world.

★★★★★

ON AN AVERAGE night, Ciara sleeps no more than four, maybe five hours at most. She is often up before dawn, plotting her next career move and intent on making

all her entrepreneurial dreams—to open a restaurant, develop a fashion label, get into real estate—a reality. But of late, her insomnia can be traced to a very specific, growing anxiety. She befriended Whitney Houston recently, and their conversations have filled her with foreboding.

"People don't realize just how much pressure being famous brings," she says. "Especially when everybody turns on you. Look at the way Whitney, Beyoncé and Janet have been treated. These are beautiful, humble people who are being persecuted simply because they are famous. And what about Michael, poor, poor Michael?"

Ciara refuses to watch any of the coverage of Michael Jackson's child-abuse case, she says, because she doesn't want to be tainted by negativity.

"He's the king of pop! He's one of a kind, a genius! I hate what is happening to him at the moment and I fear, truly, that one day it could happen to me as well."

Surely she doesn't mean that she too will be accused of child abuse?

Her response is delivered loudly, eyes bulging, both fists clenched.

"No, no! What I'm talking about is the negativity that comes with fame, with public life. I've seen how bad it can get, and I just pray that the worst doesn't happen to me."

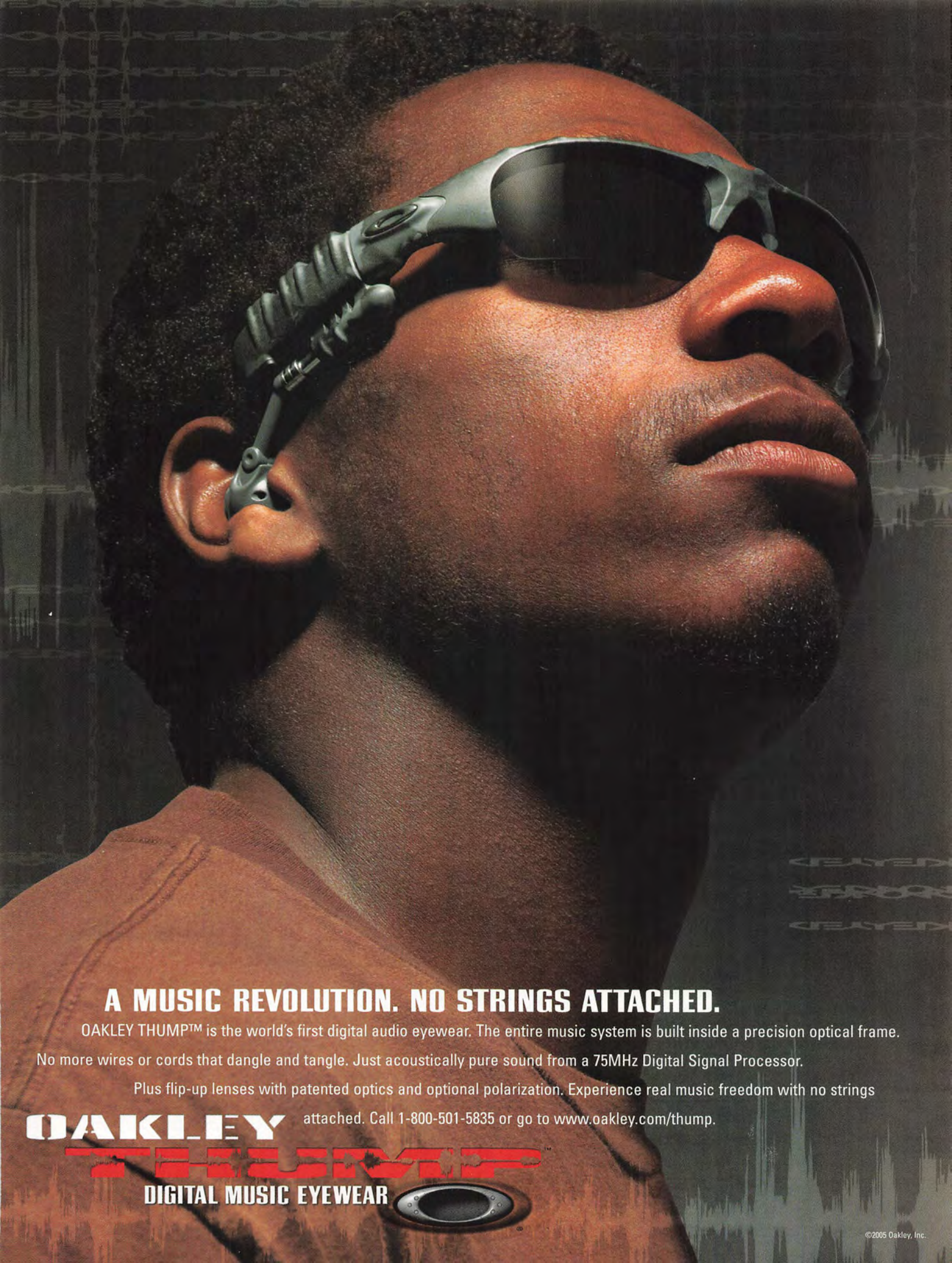
Her father, whose paternal pride soars like fireworks at the slightest opportunity, believes that, at just 19, his daughter has found her calling. And fame, he predicts, will not come at a price.

"This little girl," he says, "she's like a magnet. She draws good people to her, and those that are no good she simply pushes aside. She handles it all so well; she'll be around for 20 years. More."

"I believe I've been given an amazing opportunity here," Ciara concludes. "Sure, it keeps me awake at night, but there'll be time to sleep later on. Right now," she says, snapping her fingers, "it's all focus focus." [BLENDR]



Cleaning up at the Soul Train Music Awards, February 2005.



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HEATSTROKE! MISCHA BARTON! WAYNE COYNE IN A 10-FOOT-TALL BUBBLE! FROM L.A.'S SEEDY PUNK CIRCUIT TO A 100,000-PERSON DESERT BLOWOUT, THIS IS THE STORY OF **COACHELLA**, THE PLANET'S BEST MUSIC FESTIVAL.

BY JOSH EELLS AND JONAH WEINER

SINCE 1999, HUNDREDS of thousands of music fans have invaded the tiny town of Indio, California, converging on a sun-scorched field in the southern Mojave desert to spend two days sweating through their underwear, slathering SPF 45 over their dust-caked skin and enjoying five stages of alternative music's biggest and best stars.

Founded six years ago by veteran L.A. punk promoters Goldenvoice, the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival wasn't a shoo-in to become the hipster-rock mecca it is today. Angry men in baseball caps dominated rock radio. Lollapalooza, alt-rock's iconic tour, had fizzled. And Woodstock '99 had just derailed into a wreckage of overpriced drinks, sexual assault and limpbizkit, cementing the popular conception of festivals as inhumane, greedy and unsafe.

"Everybody who came to Coachella the first year got a free bottle of water," says Paul Tollett, the festival's co-founder. Built on a fan-friendly mix of quality control and compassion, Coachella proved festivals needn't be miserable rip-offs (each 35-band day cost \$50 the first year) and pumped a smart, DIY aesthetic into the mainstream. With massive chart success for bands like Modest Mouse, the Killers and Franz Ferdinand, indie rock has come back big, and Coachella is central to the renaissance. This year's bill runs the spectrum from Montreal upstarts the Arcade Fire to Sri Lankan dance phenomenon M.I.A. to Coldplay. And to think, it all started with a college kid and a flier ...

PAUL TOLLETT (COACHELLA CO-FOUNDER) I always wanted to work for Goldenvoice. I thought they had the greatest fliers. It's funny—when I first started there in the mid-'80s, the owner, Gary Tovar, said to go make a flier, and I thought, "I'm just not capable." I mean, I was a chemical engineering major! Around the same time, Rick Van Santen started helping on publicity. Then Gary got caught selling pot and went to jail in 1991, so Rick and I just kept it going.

BEN GIBBARD (DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE SINGER, PLAYED 2004) They're these super-cool O.C. punk dudes. They almost have a family feel about them.

PAUL TOLLETT Goldenvoice always put on great shows: No Doubt's first show in 1987, the first Pixies show in L.A. in 1988. But we struggled financially. By the late '90s, Rick and I had seen a couple of European festivals. There were no big destination festivals here, and we wanted to do one.

CHRIS MARTIN (COLDPLAY SINGER, PLAYING 2005) That's the only thing that Europe has America beat on. I got into so many bands through festivals—the Flaming Lips, PJ Harvey, Sigur Rós.

PAUL TOLLETT We thought it could save us, so we took the chance. We'd already pro-



"I'm the mole man!" Radiohead perform, 2004.

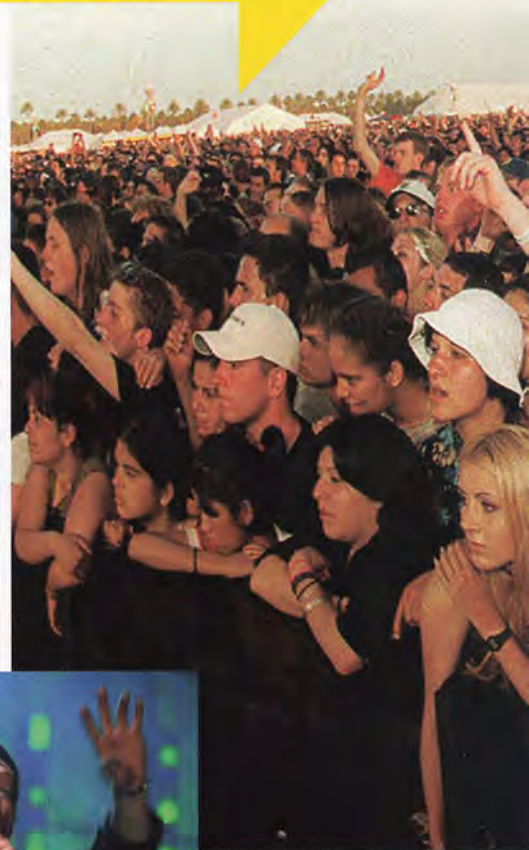
moted Pearl Jam at the polo grounds in Indio in 1993, and the field was great, so we chose that site again.

BRAD RAMOS (POLICE CHIEF, CITY OF INDIO) Indio is the City of

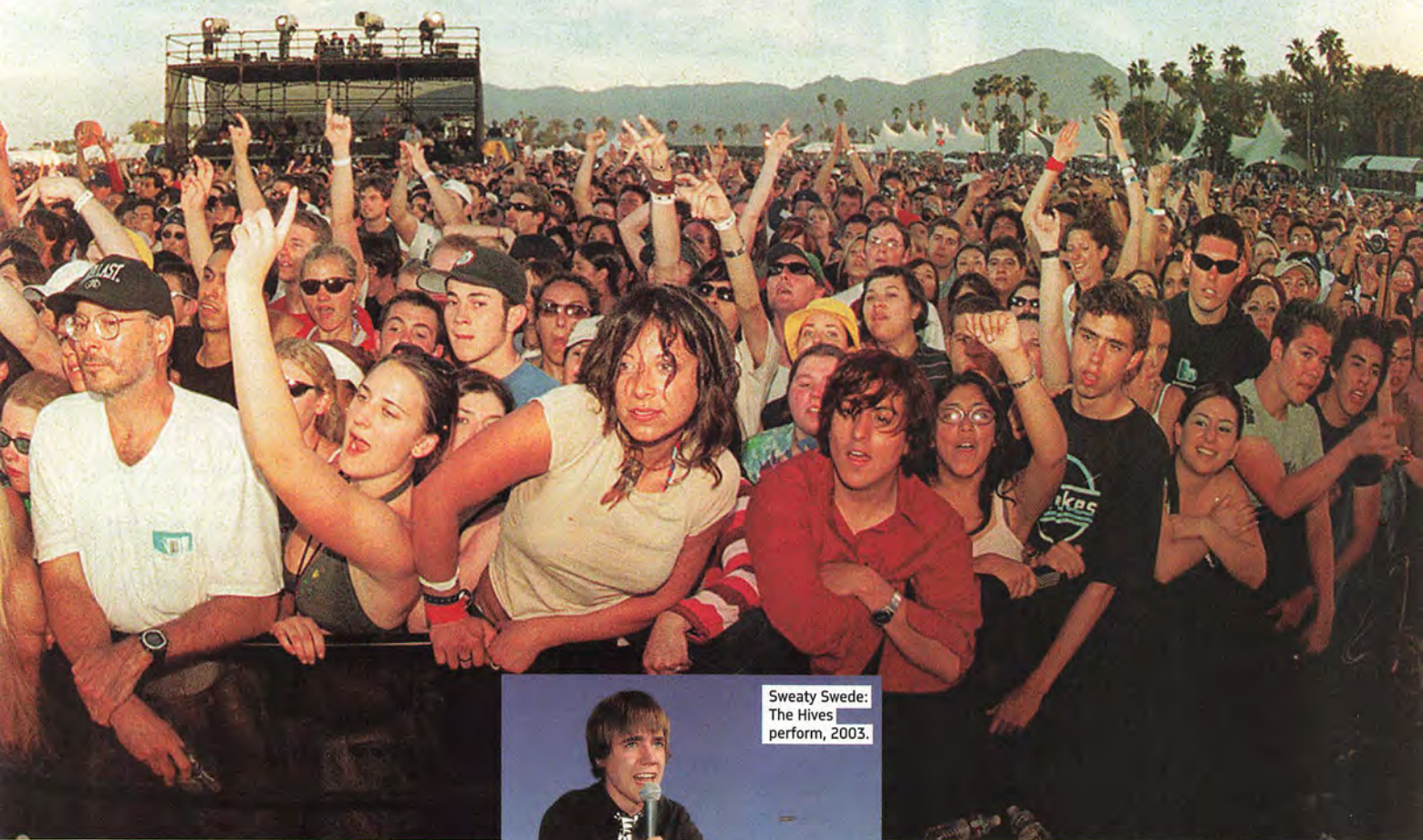
Festivals. We have the Tamale Festival, the Horse Show in the Sun, a salsa festival, a date festival ...

JOSH HOMME (QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE SINGER, PLAYED 2002–2004) In that part of the desert, you get these long shadows, because the sun dips behind the San Jacinto mountains before it sets. And the grounds are all green grass and palm trees—you feel like you're in a tropical place. It makes you feel good.

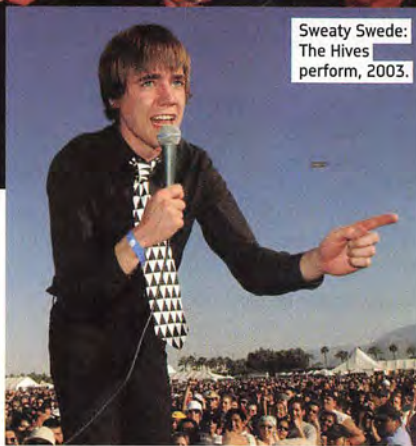
PAUL TOLLETT We put the first Coachella on sale in 1999—Beck and Rage Against



"OK, so that's 117 grande burritos."



Sweaty Swede:
The Hives
perform, 2003.



the Machine headlining. And that same week, Woodstock '99 happened. Terrible! You're launching something you think everyone's gonna love, and CNN's talking about how horrible festivals are, debating whether or not they should be banned.

MOBY (PLAYED 1999) Woodstock '99 was the least civilized festival I've ever been to. It felt like a dirty, overcrowded refugee camp. The music was all macho, testosterone-fueled rock—it was disastrous.

WAYNE COYNE (FLAMING LIPS SINGER, PLAYED 2004) It was taken over by jarhead jocks—they were wearing T-shirts with peace signs on them, but they wanted to treat it like the after-party for a football game.

ED SIMONS (CHEMICAL BROTHERS, PLAYED 1999–2002) It was one of the few moments in my life where I've actually been terrified watching music.

PAUL TOLLETT People were so afraid, our insurance, our security, everything went up. We had a lot of convincing to do.

MOBY Coachella was more in tune with the spirit of the original Woodstock. I played the first year, and I was hoping they weren't going to lose their shirts.

PAUL TOLLETT The morning of the show, we got a call saying Zach de la Rocha had lost his voice and Rage might not be playing. We didn't even know what to think, but, thankfully, they showed up. The total attendance for both days was only

39,000. Rick and I lost \$850,000 on that show. Money we did not have.

MOBY It seemed like it was going to be a money pit.

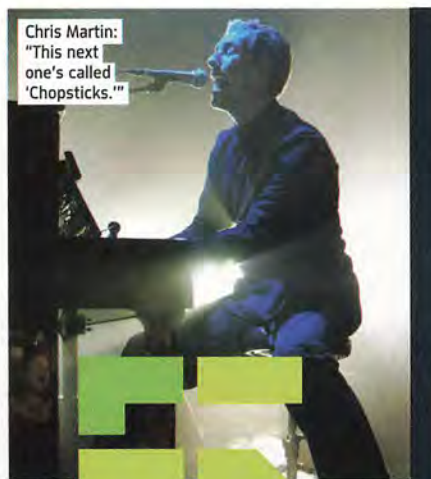
PAUL TOLLETT Another hurdle was that we had the worst temperature we've ever had. It was 112 one day, 107 the other.

WAYNE COYNE People think, "Oh, it's gonna be great to go to California for a nice, sunny couple of days." What they don't realize is that it's fucking miserable! It's dry and it's too hot!

NICK ZINNER (YEAH YEAH YEAHS GUITARIST, PLAYED WITH BRIGHT EYES, 2004): There's no shade, and if there is any, 700 people cram in there.

WAYNE COYNE Well, sure, you're going to have to wait four hours to pee, and there's not going to be any shade. But I say if you're young and on





Chris Martin:
"This next
one's called
'Chopsticks.'"

THE FAB

THE COACHELLA 2005 LINEUP IS PACKED WITH ROCK GOODNESS, BUT THESE ACTS ARE TRULY WORTH THE SUNBURN.

RILO KILEY

WHEN Saturday, April 30

SOUND LIKE Hooky Hollywood indie rock with a fiercely adorable lead singer.

SHOUT OUT FOR "It's a Hit." Like a Michael Moore movie, only with more "shoo-bop"s.

COLDPLAY

WHEN Saturday, April 30

SOUND LIKE If Thom Yorke and Bono teamed up to write Hallmark cards.

SHOUT OUT FOR "The Scientist." Behold the sweet-talking seduction skills that made Apple possible.

M.I.A.

WHEN? Sunday, May 1

SOUNDS LIKE Computerized booty music full of catchy incitements to riot.

SHOUT OUT FOR "Galang." Imagine Mother Goose reborn as a chirpy-voiced dancehall reggae toaster.

GANG OF FOUR

WHEN Sunday, May 1

SOUND LIKE Franz Ferdinand with Rage Against the Machine's conscience.

SHOUT OUT FOR "Damaged Goods." Google the lyrics to the Marxist singalong the night before and wow that cute hipster babe next to you.

THE ARCADE FIRE

WHEN Sunday, May 1

SOUNDS LIKE Theatrical and winningly self-serious, like the Max Fischer Players gone indie-rock.

SHOUT OUT FOR "Neighborhood #2 (Laika)." More proof Montreal is hipper than wherever you're from.



The Pixies' Frank Black in 2004: "Call me Big Poppa!"

drugs and there to be with your friends and possibly have sex with somebody, those things don't matter. Those are small obstacles when you're seeking life's big answers.

JOSH HOMME People who complain about the heat can go to the pussy tents. I'm from the Coachella Valley, and that's a good time of year. That's springtime!

★★★★★

BETWEEN RECORD HEAT, underwhelming attendance and losses approaching a million dollars, the first Coachella could have been the last.

PAUL TOLLETT Thankfully, Rick and I had great credit. Beck and Rage lowered their rates, and waited to get paid. We owe those two forever.

DON MULLER (TALENT AGENT, LOLLAPALOOZA CO-FOUNDER): I wanted to help Paul and Rick because of their vision—they put art first. So I was able to get a lot of bands to reduce their rates.

PAUL TOLLETT It's the weirdest thing. The

next day I thought, "Wow, it might put us out of business, but this is the best thing we've ever done."

DANIEL KESSLER (INTERPOL GUITARIST, PLAYED 2003) I think after the first one, bands and fans had such a great time that it became this mythical thing.

MELANIE FESMIRE (MAYOR, CITY OF INDIO) I'm more into Bonnie Raitt, Sarah McLachlan, that kind of music. We saw some bands playing in one of the tents, and it sounded kind of monotonous. I think they might have been on—what's that drug? Ecstasy? But the kids seemed to enjoy it.

PAUL TOLLETT We scrambled, that's how we got through. And we turned down a lot of offers for corporate sponsorship, because we knew they'd hurt the show.

JOSH HOMME Like, do you want to go to the Coachella Festival or the Sprite Wet Your Ass tour?



Wayne Coyne plays "human volleyball," 2004.

PAUL TOLLETT We didn't do another Coachella until 2001. We shortened it to one day, because we were still wounded. We forgot trash cans, but the worst thing was that every manager wanted prime time. Well, I did that. Problem was, the Chemical Brothers, Paul Oakenfold and Fatboy Slim were all playing at once.

ED SIMONS We DJ'd there in a tent, and it was just an incredible, intense vibe.

PAUL TOLLETT In 2002, we were back to two days and five stages. This was the year of Björk and Oasis, and the best weather we've had. We didn't make any mistakes, which is rare. And that was the year we broke even.

KELLY OSBOURNE (ATTENDED 2001-2003) Björk played

pregnant—it was insane. They'd handed out little ladybug rings earlier, and if you had one you could watch from the side of the stage. I still have mine.

★★★★★

2002 NUDGED COACHELLA out of the red, but it wasn't until 2003 that the dream of creating an alt-rock mecca really came together.

PAUL TOLLETT In 2003, Rick and I finally made a profit. We had Interpol, we had the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the White Stripes, the Beastie Boys and Iggy Pop.

DONNA F. (THE DONNAS BASSIST, PLAYED 2003) Only the best bands get to play. Also, they have really good tacos there for, like, \$2

ANDY SLATER (PRESIDENT AND CEO, CAPITOL RECORDS) You get the imprimatur of the alternative community if you're chosen for that bill.



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Dresser in the dark: Björk plays, 2002.



"Someone order a guitar?" Foo Fighters perform, 2002.

DON MULLER The kids there are the trendsetters of America—maybe even the world. They know the Killers, Modest Mouse, way before anybody else.

BEN GIBBARD Out of the 50,000 people there, probably everybody had seen a Wes Anderson movie.

DONNA F. There's a lot of weirdos there. They're all artsy and want to be noticed so they wear crazy outfits. We wanted to watch the Red Hot Chili Peppers, but we couldn't get close enough, so we just got really, really drunk on a golf cart.

★★★★★

TWO HOURS from Los Angeles, Coachella grew into a weekend getaway for Hollywood's young and fully comped: Jared Leto, Drew Barrymore, Neve Campbell and *The O.C.*'s Adam Brody have all clustered in the VIP tent.

KELLY OSBOURNE My mom gets really pissed off when I say this, but it's the world's best music festival. I've had more fun at Coachella than any other show, including Ozfest.

MISCHA BARTON (ACTRESS, ATTENDED 2004) The VIP area was crowded, but the port-a-potties were cleaner there.

BEN GIBBARD Adam Brody was on the side of the stage when we were playing. He seemed to be enjoying it as much as anybody else in the 105-degree heat.

KELLY OSBOURNE There's this area backstage I call Lil' Hollywood. Every C-list actor you can think of, getting beer and smoking pot. It's fun.

★★★★★

IN DECEMBER 2003, Coachella co-founder Rick Van Santen died in his



"You rock!" "No, you rock!" The Strokes and Beck backstage, 2002.

sleep from flu-related complications—on the eve of the festival's greatest success yet.

PAUL TOLLETT Rick and I had known each other for coming up on 20 years. He died, then the 2004 show came around and it was the biggest yet. We had Radiohead's only U.S. show of the year. But it was bittersweet, because of Rick.

BRANDON FLOWERS (THE KILLERS SINGER, PLAYED 2004) We hadn't toured much, our album wasn't out yet and we were in the smallest tent at like one in the afternoon. But it was a good look for us.

WAYNE COYNE Beck played a secret show—he was just running to the stage as we showed up.

FRANK BLACK (PIXIES SINGER, PLAYED 2004)



It was this tiny tent, and thousands of people were crowded around it.

DON MULLER When you get artists like Beck playing acoustic, unannounced, and getting paid nothing for it—that's a serious vibe.

PAUL TOLLETT When I heard we also had a chance at getting the Pixies, it was almost too good to be true.

FRANK BLACK When we finally decided to get back together, the first thing we did was secure Coachella. It's the hot gig.

NICK ZINNER The Pixies were magic, and the crowd was a sea of smiles. It was the most genuine reaction I'd ever seen from a crowd.

FRANK BLACK We did a warm-up tour, but this was the "we're baaack" moment. It became a watershed.

PAUL TOLLETT Standing onstage during the Pixies was the highlight of my career. Radiohead was up next, and I thought, "It's finally coming together."

MISCHA BARTON Radiohead were great—the wind picked up and cooled things off. And I saw the Cure for the first time.

NICK ZINNER I was leaving a hotel party at 4 a.m. and ran into Robert Smith. He invited me up to his room and played the new Cure album as the sun was rising.

WAYNE COYNE I thought, "Fuck! This is the meeting of the minds, something's gotta happen!" That's why I rolled out over the crowd in a giant bubble. It was sort of crowd-surfing, Jesus walking on water—and it turned out to be this moment that everybody remembers.

MOBY Coachella was the beginning of people turning away from so-called "rape rock" and towards more intelligent, nuanced music. With bands like Franz Ferdinand, the Strokes and the White Stripes, music has become a lot more interesting. Franz Ferdinand could never have headlined Woodstock '99.

WAYNE COYNE Where else is something like this going on? We have Radiohead, we've got the Pixies, we've got the sunshine and we've got optimism. If you can

be at two or three things like this in your lifetime, you've done good.

CHRIS MARTIN Radiohead, the Pixies and the Cure all on one bill? That, to me, is heaven. That's where I'm going when I die. Compared to that we'll be nothing but a letdown.

NICK ZINNER I'm psyched to go back. But this year, I'm bringing a sunbrella. [BLENDER]

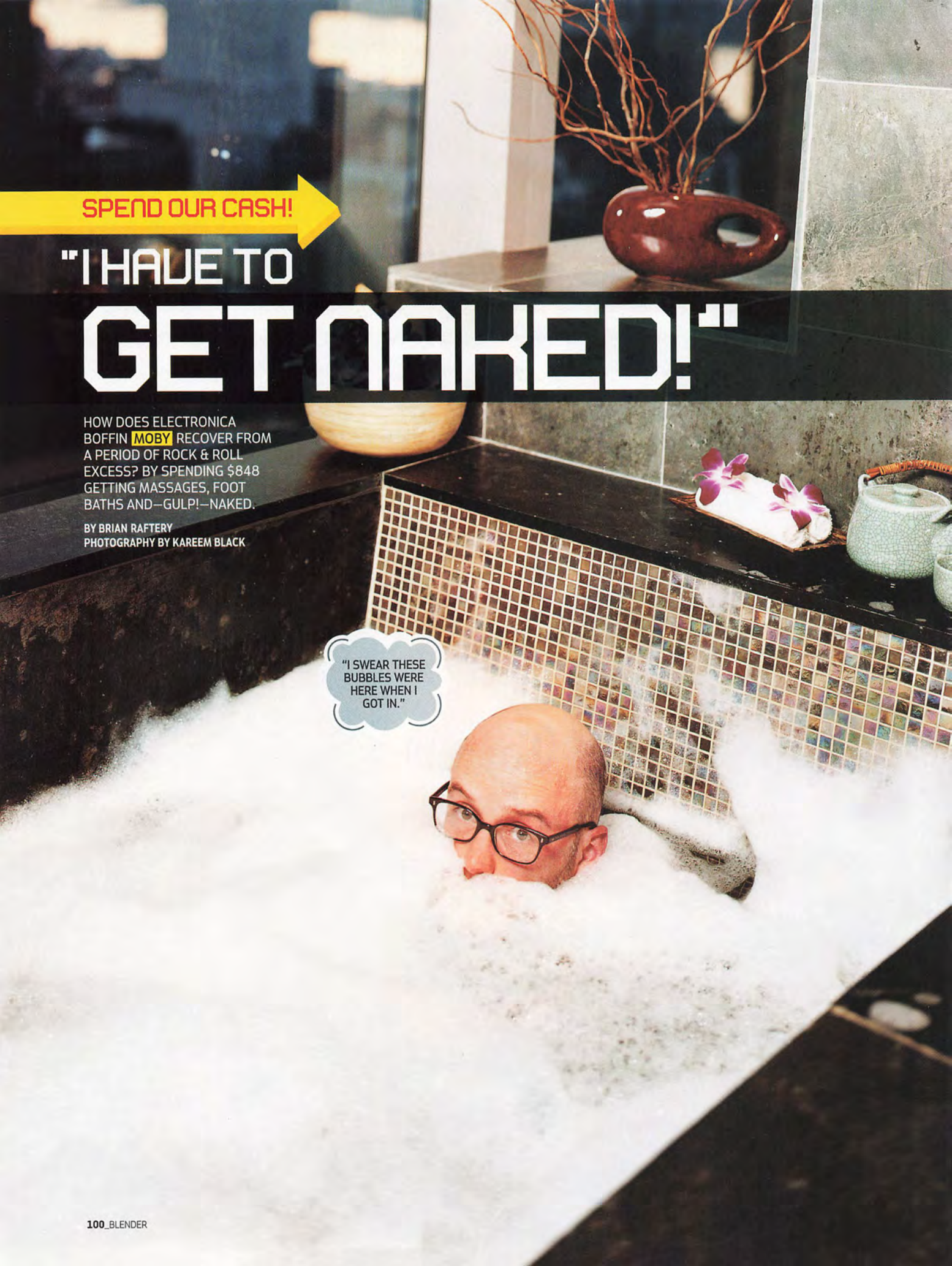
"WE GOT REALLY DRUNK ON A GOLF CART."

Additional reporting by Lauren Harris.



Please Drink Responsibly

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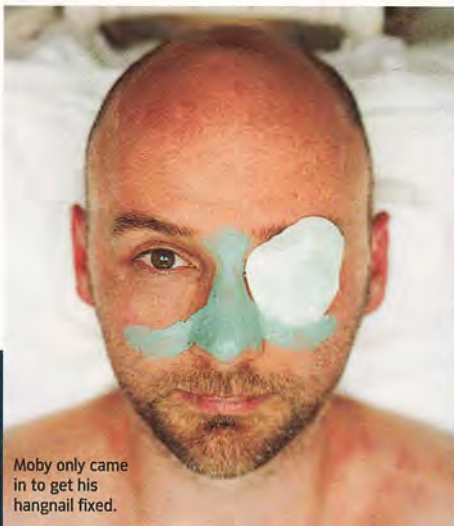
SPEND OUR CASH!

"I HAVE TO GET NAKED!"

HOW DOES ELECTRONICA
BOFFIN **MOBY** RECOVER FROM
A PERIOD OF ROCK & ROLL
EXCESS? BY SPENDING \$848
GETTING MASSAGES, FOOT
BATHS AND—GULP!—NAKED.

BY BRIAN RAFTERY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAREEM BLACK

"I SWEAR THESE
BUBBLES WERE
HERE WHEN I
GOT IN."



Moby only came in to get his hangnail fixed.

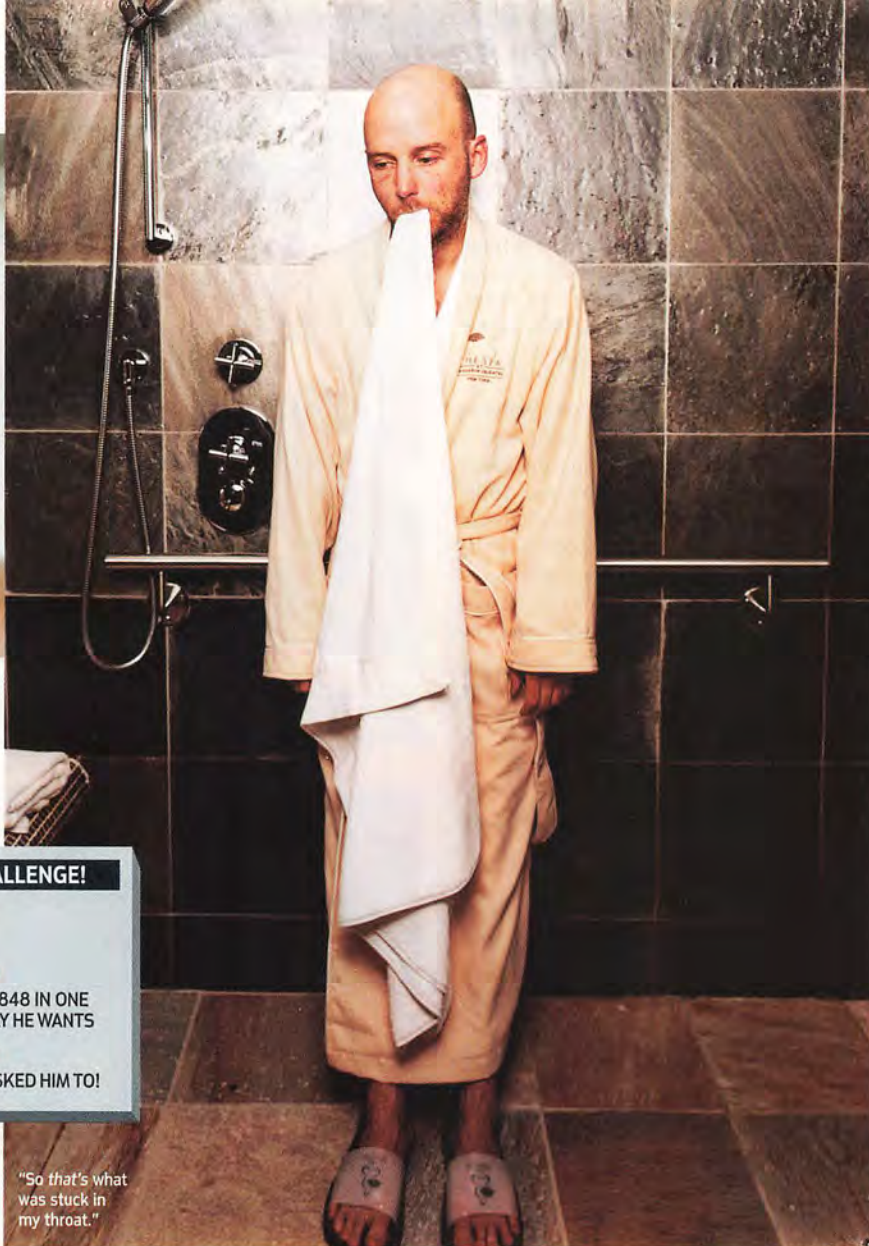
STRADDLING AN impossibly deep, bubble-abundant bathtub, Moby pulls at the belt of his fuzzy white bathrobe and issues *Blender* a warning.

"Look out! Middle-aged rock star about to get into the water," he says, and then, a bit more seriously: "I have to get naked. I don't have my bathing suit, so you'd better turn around."

Fearful of catching a glimpse of Moby dick, *Blender* averts its eyes; when the coast is clear, we look back to see the 39-year-old singer's bald noggin popping up and down, a foam goatee just a few inches below his black glasses. He glimpses downward. "I don't have a lot to cover up, anyway," he shrugs.

Good to know, considering he'll be spending the next few hours in various states of semi-dress, all for the greater cause of being preened, rubbed, oiled and pampered during a day-spa session at New York's Mandarin Oriental hotel, courtesy of *Blender* and our \$848 budget. If the ornate Cloud City from *The Empire Strikes Back* had a therapeutic facility, it would look something like this, with two beck-and-call attendants, a pair of impeccably maintained massage beds, a fireplace, a steam room with marble stars in the ceiling and more candles and lotions than Patti LaBelle's backstage rider. It smells so strongly of eucalyptus in here, *Blender* wouldn't be surprised to find one of the Ricola dudes hiding out in the corner, alpenhorn in hand.

But the day of man-beauty is somewhat terrifying to Moby, whose only hands-on experience of such was a cheapo massage at a Seattle airport a few years ago. Truth be told, he looks slightly terrified when he takes a seat to get a five-minute foot massage, a ritual that includes Tibetan chimes and a no-tickle policy. He's seated next to ex-girlfriend Kelly



\$848 CHALLENGE!

THE ARTIST
MOBY

THE MISSION
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THE REASON
BLENDER ASKED HIM TO!

"So that's what was stuck in my throat."



"Where the hell did I put those brown, disc-y things?"

Tisdale, the co-founder of Moby's TeaNY restaurant and Moby's jovial antagonist.

"He's a Calvinist," Tisdale explains. "He doesn't like to spoil himself."

Oh come on, not even a nice, relaxing foot rub?

"I fear it," Moby says.

He's only kinda kidding. Truth be told,

he picked the exfoliating escapade to see how rock stars are supposed to be living it up—and to pick up some advice on how to get some better shut-eye. "He sleeps like this," says Tisdale, scrunching her face into an anxious-newborn scowl.

"So, Moby," his attendant asks, "in the time that we have, is there anything in particular you'd like to work on?"

"I just like things that feel nice," he says. "Do you have ear-candling?"

They do not. Instead, his attendant hands him two smooth stones, telling him to place them in his hands when he's in bed to help him snooze. He then drops his toes into a bowl of warm water and glossy pebbles.

"I looove this foot-bath thing," he coos dryly. "I've never had it in water before. I thought I was ticklish. I guess the liquor and the drugs have dulled that part of me."

He's then presented with a possibly emasculating assortment of oils to choose from. He sniffs at the dabble on his wrist and shakes his head.

"Smells like a hangover," he shudders.

For someone who apparently fears indulgence, Moby had no problem living it up in the months following the release of 2002's *18*. He went around the world, attended every event he could get into, and eventually learned a harsh lesson in excess: "If eating one Twinkie isn't going to make you happy, then eating 10 Twinkies isn't going to make you happy," he says.

Of course, Moby's a vegan, and Twinkies are out of the question (damn those eggs!). So he and Tisdale are enjoying a delicately prepared, vegan-friendly Bento box while lounging on an ornate bed in the center of the room, their white bathrobes looking remarkably lived-in after only a few hours. Surrounded by soothing throw pillows and nerve-loosening feng shui, what better setting is there to reminisce about your lowest moments?

"His desperation made me nervous," Tisdale says. "It wasn't just that he was looking for a good time; he was unhappy. And it was really unsafe—all of his excesses."

What sort of excesses?

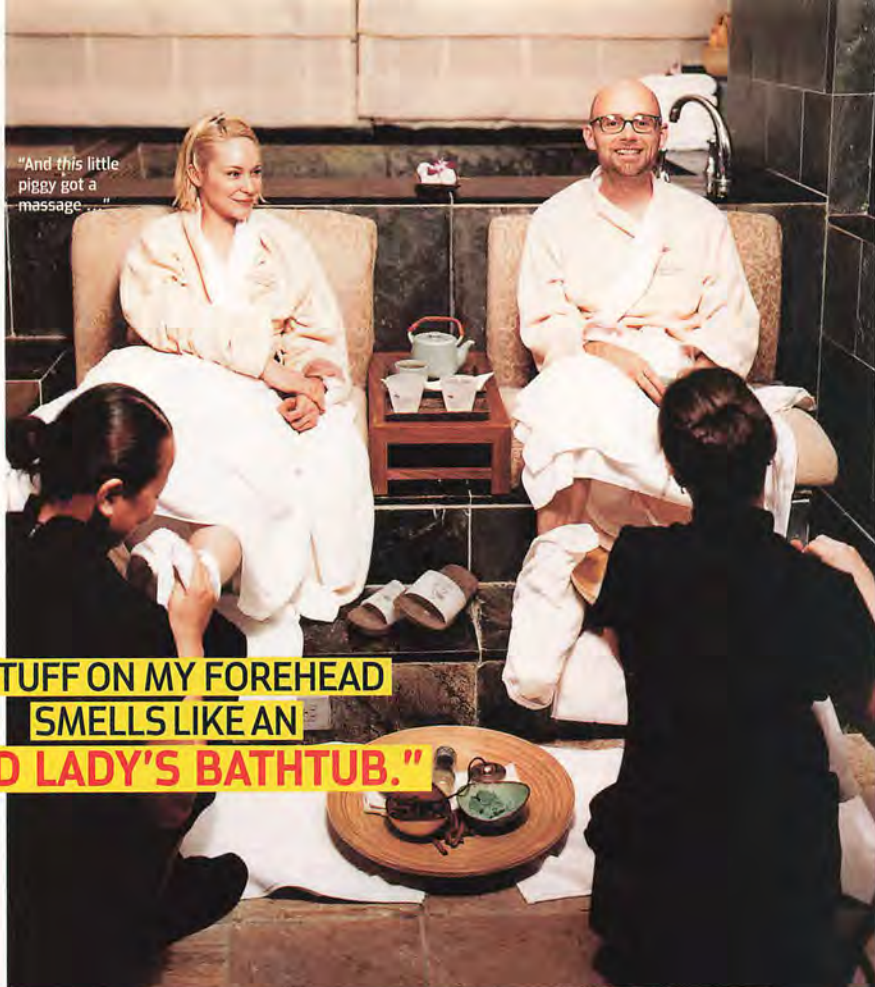
"The usual garden variety," says Moby. "Give an idiot too much money, in a city with vices that are readily available, and ..." He shrugs. "Nothing too offensive. Despite all my best intentions, I got caught up in being a celebrity. You find yourself going to parties with celebrities—strip clubs and what-not—and the novelty is finding yourself in situations you wouldn't ordinarily find yourself in. And all of a sudden, you realize it's no longer a novelty."

The last time Moby tried to stretch his rock-star piggy bank to the hilt, he was in a Barcelona taxi, pleading with the driver to send the car straight into a storefront window.

"You kept offering him more and more money," Tisdale reminds him.

"And he wouldn't do it," sighs Moby, still sounding a bit crestfallen.

After his friends talked some sense into him, Moby went back to his home studio and got to work—a crazy amount of work, in fact: He wrote nearly 275 songs during the sessions for his latest CD, *Hotel*—so many, in fact, that he's already got two more albums planned, including a punk rock record and a follow-up to *Hotel*. So, clearly, he deserves a little relaxation. But can a guy who churns out a new song every day really



"And this little piggy got a massage..."

**"THIS STUFF ON MY FOREHEAD
SMELLS LIKE AN
OLD LADY'S BATHTUB."**



"Waiter, there's a fly in my tofu!"

stop to sniff the hydrating cleansing milk?

The answer comes shortly after Moby finally removes his spectacles and flops belly-down on the massage table. Hot rocks are delicately slid up and down his back, and soon enough, he is stone-cold silent.

"He's never this quiet," Tisdale whispers in amazement. And then, a low, melodic moan rises from underneath the headrest:

"Unnnnnnnnnhhhhh," Moby moans, inadvertently writing song No. 276. His back sufficiently noodly, he shifts around under his towel—*Blender*, not being warned, catches a bit of his bits—and it's time for a head rub.

"This stuff on my forehead—what is it?" he asks. "It smells like an old lady's bathtub." (It's some sort of



That water is now on eBay.

apricot-watercress combination, in case you were wondering.)

At the end of the treatment, Moby rises from the table like a cadaver come to life, his eyes red, his eyelids determined to power down. He probably won't have any problems sleeping tonight.

"During the massage, I was thinking about work," he says, adjusting his bathrobe. "I've been forcing myself not to think about it, so I was trying some relaxation techniques." One such technique is daydreaming about spending money—but this time his own. "I want to try out other spas," he enthuses. "I'm going to develop a \$1,000-a-week massage habit!" [*BLENDER*]

HOW HE SPENT IT

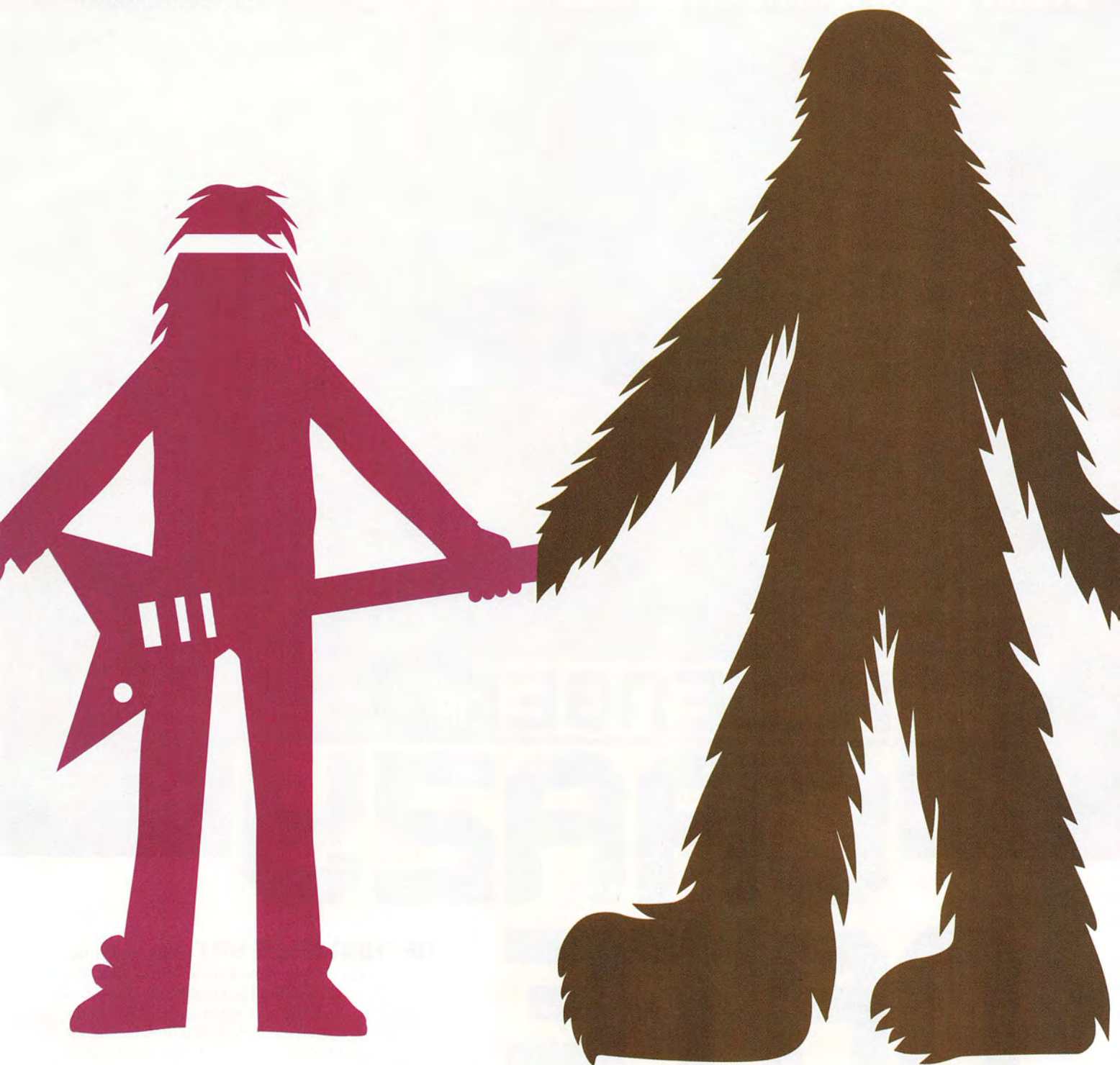
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MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL
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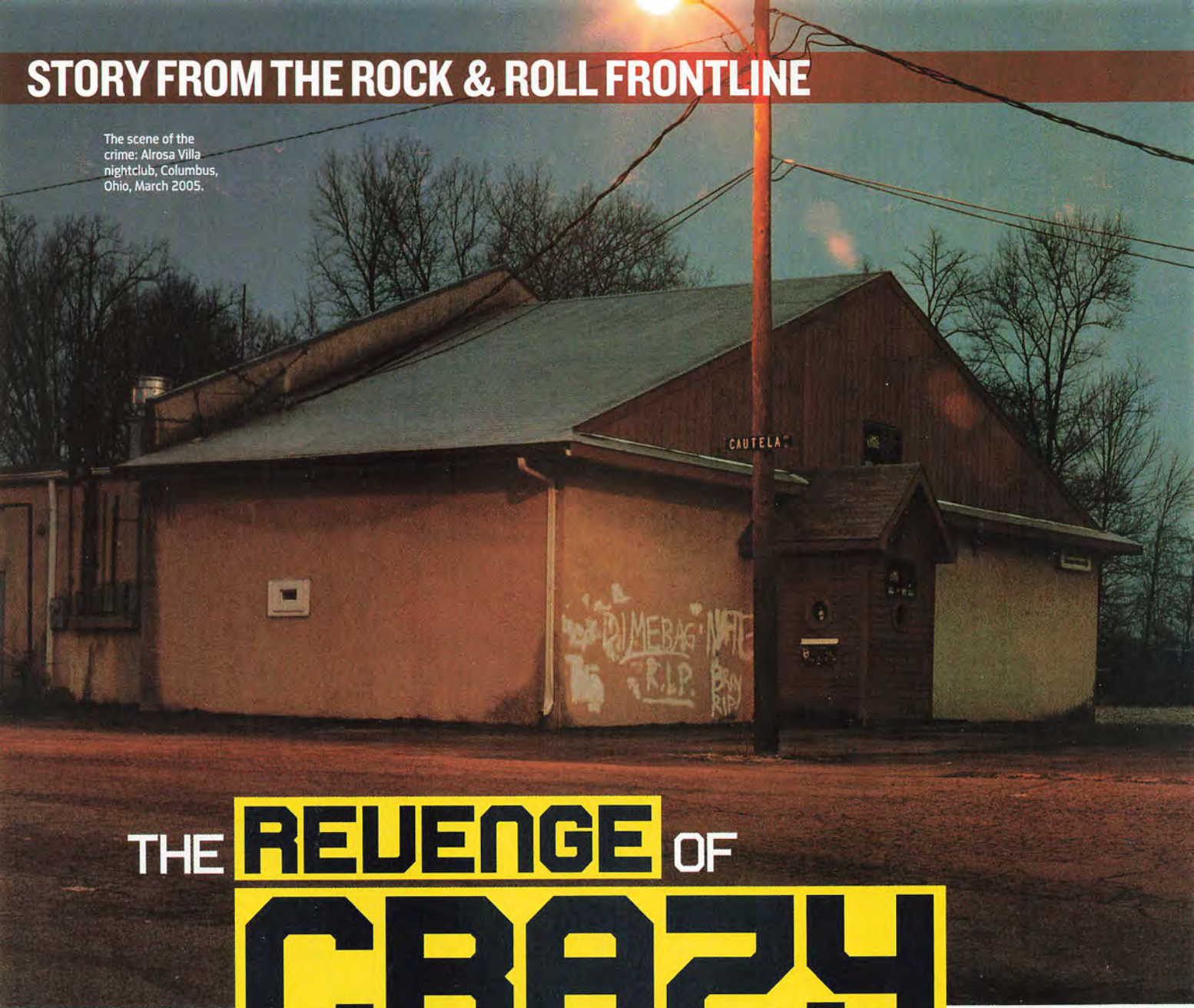
**THERE'S A LITTLE BIT
OF SOMEONE IN
EVERYONE.**



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STORY FROM THE ROCK & ROLL FRONTLINE

The scene of the crime: Alrosa Villa nightclub, Columbus, Ohio, March 2005.



THE REVENGE OF CRAZY NATE

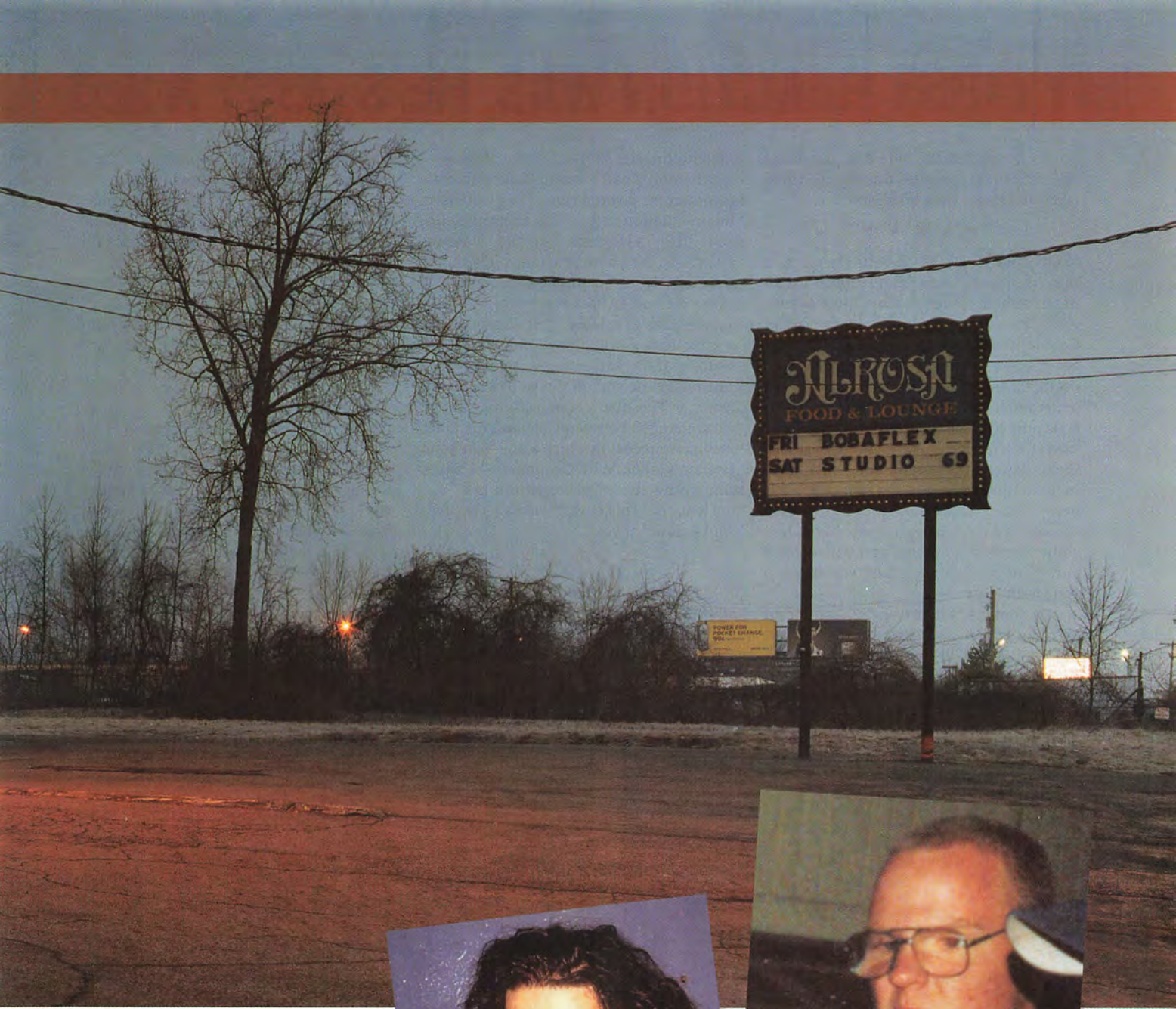


BACK HOME IN MARYSVILLE, OHIO, PEOPLE KNEW NATHAN GALE AS A BIG, WEIRD GUY WHO COULDN'T HOLD DOWN A JOB AND LOVED PANTERA. NO ONE PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO HIM, UNTIL THE NIGHT LAST DECEMBER WHEN HE CLIMBED ONSTAGE AND SHOT "DIMEBAG" DARRELL ABBOTT IN THE HEAD.

BY CHRIS NORRIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SARAH WILSON

NATHAN GALE SAT in his '95 Pontiac Grand Am, staring at the Alrosa Villa. The small, family-owned nightclub—a tan stucco building on a lonely strip off I-71 in the northern outskirts of Columbus, Ohio—had hosted metal bands since its opening in 1974. Now it was midway through a decent Wednesday bill: The headliner was Damageplan, a new group founded by ex-Pantera guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott and his brother, drummer Vinnie Paul. Tickets: eight bucks.

It was dark, around 40 degrees, and Gale had been in the parking lot for hours. Three times, security guards had made him move his car out of the way of other traffic; now it was parked near the looming tour bus by the rear entrance. Gale wore jeans and a hooded sweatshirt with the logo



Prey and predator:
Left, Dimebag in New York,
1993; right, Gale in
an undated photograph.

of the Columbus Blue Jackets hockey team stretched over his six-foot-three, 266-lb. frame. The 25-year-old gazed through a pair of thick, eye-magnifying specs that his former comrades in the Marines had called “birth control glasses” for their woman-repelling qualities. His blond hair was shaved to the scalp.

Gale got out of the car and started pacing. Other clubgoers and staff had already noticed the big, goggle-eyed figure stalking around the lot and wondered what he was up to. Someone called over that the support act was onstage and Gale might want to go in. “I don’t care about local bands,” he said. He’d already had a gentle rebuff from Damageplan’s gigantic security chief, Jeffery “Mayhem” Thompson, when he was hanging around the tour bus, asking if Dime or

his brother were aboard. Finally, at 10:15, Gale decided to try one more time.

He walked over and asked Damageplan’s soundman, Aaron Barns, if either of the brothers was on the bus. Barns told him that they’d already gone inside. Gale turned and strode quickly towards the club.

Coming to a high wooden fence blocking a patio on the club’s side, he jumped up and grabbed hold of the top. Mitch Carpenter, a parking-lot security guard, saw the apparent gatecrasher and came running. Gale hauled himself quickly over and hit the pavement on the other side, his pockets clinking with steel and brass: a 9-mm Beretta semiautomatic, two clips and 30 extra bullets. →

"MY FIRST REACTION WAS, HE'S JUST A KID

As he neared the side door he heard cheers erupting inside. Damageplan had taken the stage. Gale broke into a run.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"YOU NEVER LOOK at your friend as a mass murderer," says Ryan Hughes, exhal-ing in mild disbelief. A 26-year-old Marys-ville, Ohio, resident, Hughes knew Nathan Gale for years prior to the night of Decem-ber 8, 2004, when Gale shot four people to death, including a leading guitar hero of his generation. Of all the descriptions of Gale offered since the murders—"tweaky," "sweet," "creepy," "gentle"—Hughes does the most to reconcile conflicting memories, to put a human behind the monster. "You ever read *Of Mice and Men*?" he asks. "Lenny? That's what Nate was like. He'd come running up to you and you weren't sure if he was going to hug you or snap your neck."

But details fade fast in the light of an event as shattering and unexpected as that of December 8—the first-ever onstage murder of a rock star. It's the kind of horror you want to get away from fast. Friends and

metal pinnacle, *Vulgar Display of Power*—much more than Nathan Gale's favorite record by his favorite band. It was an object for meditation, a tool for transcendence and, finally, a labyrinth he couldn't escape. Even now, the 50-minute rage opus shouts warnings from an unknowable mind. "I won't let you in to have a story to tell," snarls "Live in a Hole." "Possessed/I feel a conquering will down inside me." If Nathan Gale had wanted to join rock mythology, he couldn't have picked better material. The album even has an account of what changed between Gale and his idols, the inner process in which a fan—like John Lennon's killer, Mark Chapman—becomes something else. "Deeper within me," run the lyrics of "This Love," "Love was twisted/ And pointed at you."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NATHAN MILES GALE was born in Lan-sing, Illinois, on September 11, 1979, the last of three boys in the family. His father, Gerald Gale, had left his mother, Mary, by the time he moved to Ohio, where he entered Benjamin Logan Elementary

School for fifth grade. School administrators noticed mental health issues early on and put Gale in special-ed classes for a learning disabili-ty. Like many kids with divorced parents, he acted out a little, racking up some disciplinary complaints, but was put back into mainstream classes in ninth grade. But in tenth grade—the year of his mother's second divorce—he began getting into more trouble, missing 33 days of school. When he and his mom relocated to Marysville, he attended the Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, a vocational school where reports say he got along well

with his peers and, at age 18, completed training as an electrician.

On his off hours, Gale hung with the guys in Marysville and did all the things you do when you're young and rebellious in a small town. "We were all pretty crazy back then," recalls Ryan Hughes, who met Gale at Hi-Point. "Just partying, drinking a lot, doing drugs, having band practice, hanging out." Gale and Hughes were part of a gang who'd gather at a run-down house on Delaware Avenue, a place out by the highway where someone's older brother

had a lease and dudes could crash, party, crank music or jam into the night.

On one of those nights at the house, Gale announced he wanted to try cocaine. He went off to do lines and came back dif-ferent. "He was a hyper dude anyway," recalls Hughes, "but now he was just sit-ting in the chair and rocking. I mean, for a long, long time—just rocking back and forth, real fast. I realized later, that's how crazy people rock."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AS DAMAGEPLAN KICKED the opening rumble of "Breathing New Life," Gale stepped into the club. He walked fast through the crowd of 400, trailed by secu-rity guard Mitch Carpenter and another bouncer who joined the chase—both hesi-tant to attack someone his size, both assuming he was just a fan dodging the cover charge. Gale continued past the pool tables and across the tiled floor. He jogged up the steps to the carpeted seating section next to the sunken mosh pit area and darted behind the giant main speakers at the front of the stage.

He pushed past the club's 19-year-old assistant, Emili Lewis, past stagehand Erin "Stoney" Halk, and strode quickly onto the stage. "My first reaction was, 'OK, he's just a kid who's gonna crowd-surf,'" Lewis recalls. "Then I remember seeing him come right in front of the drum riser." Silent against the deafening stage volume, the huge, mute, hooded figure of Nathan Gale emerged from behind a seven-foot-high wall of amplifiers. He walked across the stage, behind the bass player, behind the singer, and came up behind guitarist Dimebag Darrell.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BACK IN THE day, most everyone in Marysville loved Pantera. A rural town half an hour from Columbus, Marysville is a place where most of the jobs are at the Honda plant, and a Confederate flag hangs in a window on Fifth Street. Pantera was a hard-rock consensus-builder, shit-kicking Texans who defined a rebel attitude for kids who felt far from the fast track.

"Anybody our age grew up here with that as their lifestyle," says Lucas Bender, 25, manager of a Marysville tattoo parlor where Gale used to hang out. "You smoke pot, listen to Pantera, go to concerts." Resident Mark Break, 30, says they provid-ed an emotional outlet too: "Everyone liked them," he says of Pantera. "And a lot of us, we were on food stamps, on welfare. Maybe some of us needed them."

Sociologist Donna Gaines, whose 1992 book *Teenage Wasteland* studied the culture of alienated teenage metal fans, describes the



The first to spot trouble: Mitch Carpenter, Arosa Villa's security guard.

family of a mass murderer's victims, along with anyone else touched by the deaths, tend to simplify the killer's reasons—say-ing, "Oh, it was drugs," or "Oh, he was crazy." "It's a way for them to get distance from it," says forensic psychologist Dr. J. Reid Meloy. "But mass murders are typi-cally overdetermined. In other words, there are lots of factors that go into it."

And those factors are out there, scat-tered among history, documents, testi-monies and, sometimes, albums. In this case, the album is Pantera's 1992 thrash-

WHO'S GONNA CROWD-SURF?"

CLUB EMPLOYEE EMILI LEWIS

role music can play for especially troubled kids. "Something about the music speaks to them on an inner, psyche level," says Gaines. "It really can become what recovery experts call a 'higher power.' Somebody like [Gale] was searching for something to help him make sense of his feelings."

Weeks after his rocking, post-coke fugue state, Gale revealed a sudden desire to sing. So one afternoon, while the guys in the Delaware Ave. house were bashing heavy grooves on guitars and a drum set, Gale sat furiously scribbling lyrics, pages and pages of them. Finally, he got up to the mic. Ryan Hughes encouraged him to sing what he'd written. "And we'd be jamming and Nate would be about to scream—red in the face, veins popping, contorted with rage, lyric sheet up in his face. And he'd never say a word." Hughes shakes his head. "Never, dude. He tried over and over, and he just couldn't do it."

Around this time, Gale also began listening to one particular album by one particular band. Most of his friends had moved on from Pantera. But when Hughes gave Gale his copy of *Vulgar Display of Power*, he

began playing it constantly: "He listened to that tape for two years, every day, all day long," says Hughes. And he began writing in a journal, long stream-of-consciousness entries complaining of an inability to hear his own thoughts. This infuriating inner disconnect must have made the visceral power and tortured psychological imagery of *Vulgar Display* all the more mesmerizing. "Revenge/I'm screaming revenge again/Wrong/I've been wrong for far too long," goes "Mouth for War"; in "By Demons Be Driven," there's another kind of call to arms: "By demons be driven/Beck-on the call." Some people heard it and banged their heads; Gale heard it and got sucked in.

AS SOON AS Gale reached the middle of the stage, six-foot-one stagehand Erin Halk, a former Marine, and Damageplan's head of security, the six-foot-eight, 346-lb. Jeffery "Mayhem" Thompson, started to converge on the apparent stage-diver from either side. Before they could get there, Gale pulled out his Beretta and grabbed

Darrell Abbott in a headlock. Standing still, with his arm around his neck, Gale fired three shots into the back of his former hero's head, then one more that struck the guitarist's hand. Abbott fell forward, right leg twisting under him, his upper body slumping over his lightning-bolt-shaped guitar. The sound of feedback screeched in the air.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NO ONE SAW it happening, but at some point in 1998, Nathan Gale began to have trouble distinguishing between his own inner life and what he heard on *Vulgar Display of Power*. Sometimes, his friends in the house on Delaware Ave. found that the lyrics he was submitting as his own were actually from that album. "I just think he listened to it so much, he didn't know they weren't his lyrics," says Hughes. "He really thought he'd written them."

One night that year, Gale went with friends to see Pantera play in Dayton, Ohio. He got separated from the group, but returned the next day telling everybody how he'd befriended the band. He then →

TERROR TIMELINE

BREAKING DOWN THE KILLING OF DARRELL ABBOTT, MINUTE BY MINUTE.

10:17 P.M.

Jumps onstage. Fires first shots, killing Dimebag Darrell.

10:18-10:19 P.M.

Shoots and kills Jeff "Mayhem" Thompson, Erin "Stoney" Halk and fan Nathan Bray. Drum tech John "Kat" Brooks and Damageplan tour manager Chris Paluska try to stop him—he shoots them both.

10:19 P.M.

Grabs Brooks in a headlock and backs away from approaching cops.

10:20 P.M.

Is shot by officer James D. Niggemeyer, dying instantly.

10:16 P.M.

Rushes the fence, jumps it, pushes into the club.

10:15 P.M.

Finds out the brothers are in the club.

9:00-10:14 P.M.

Gale paces around the parking lot, asks people at Damageplan's bus if Dimebag or his brother Vinnie are aboard.

8:50 P.M.

Nathan Gale's car pulls into Alrosa Villa parking lot.

produced a pamphlet that he'd found—some 'zine or promotional booklet—and said it revealed the fact that Pantera was going to play a graduation party Gale's friend was planning.

"The way you could find that out was to read something on such-and-such page, and it will tell you to go to this other page and you'll read such-and-such—it was like a puzzle," Hughes remembers. Just as countless stoners have sat limning the hidden meanings of, say, Slayer's "Raining Blood," Gale was now parsing secret messages in real life. "And he was serious," Hughes says.

But with all the late nights and frying synapses of early-20s debauchery, his buddies were hardly up to diagnosing a mental disorder; it was impossible for them to know if Gale's strange behavior—petting an imaginary dog at a party, or telling them God had told him to kill Marilyn Manson—meant he was sick or just goofing around. "He'd been kind of weird before that, so we thought it was another 'Crazy Nate' thing," Hughes's buddy and sometime bandmate David Johnson told reporters. "That was our nickname for him: 'Crazy Nate.'"

People in places like Marysville grow up faster than in other towns, and soon Gale's buddies went on to the next stage of their lives. They gave up the lease on the Delaware Avenue house—the center of one of the last stable communities Gale had. As friends left for school, had kids, took jobs, moved on, Gale had trouble finding his next chapter. He had a series of jobs but lost them all. And life at home with his mother had its own friction. "She was always telling him to shut the fuck up, get out of her face," Hughes recalls. "It never seemed like there was a lot of love there."

For a while, Gale's mom banished him from the house, and he took to sleeping in parks. He began looking increasingly spaced out and unkempt: a lone, shabby figure roaming the streets, listening to a Walkman. Sometime around 2001, though, he seemed to turn a corner.

"He kinda cleaned himself up," says Hughes, "got back to where he was looking like he showered." But the old fixations remained: Hughes remembers talking to



The Great Escape (clockwise from top): Lucas Bender of Bear's Den tattoo shop; Gale's Rosetta stone; and the M&M Pawn and Loan.



him in the car when Gale started going on and on about Pantera. "And I was all, 'Man, that's old-school '80s metal—they suck.' And he was like, 'They don't suck!' He got real mad. Then he seemed to

GALE LISTENED TO PANTERA'S VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER ALL DAY EVERY DAY FOR TWO YEARS

blow it off. But after about 15 minutes, he looked at me and said, [gravely serious] 'You really think they suck?' He'd been sitting there, just thinking about it."

In 2002, after the lackluster chart performance of their final studio album, *Reinventing the Steel*, Pantera disbanded. The

Abbott brothers reportedly found this out third hand, after singer Phil Anselmo told the press, and the break came with bitterness on both sides. For someone with Gale's level of obsession, Donna Gaines says, such an event could have a psychological impact similar to that of a parent abandoning a young child. "He's not going to be able to get back on his feet and say, 'Let me see what [the Pantera members'] new music is, maybe I can grow with them.' Or 'Fuck them, let me check out Slayer.' He didn't have that. What was at stake was survival. Faith. Hope. Possibility. Identification. Community."

In such cases, obsessive identification with a celebrity can turn into its opposite—as with John Bardo, who in 1989 murdered actress Rebecca Schaeffer, or Mark David Chapman, who killed John Lennon 24 years to the day before Dimebag Darrell's murder. "They start out idealizing the person they end up murdering," says psychologist Ross Meloy. "Mass murders are usually premeditated for days, weeks or months. It's what we call 'predatory' rather than 'affective.' It tends to be very planned, purposeful and emotionless."

The mass murder is, in other words, a clinical, almost professional murder. Which is why friends get a chill when they recall hearing that, on February 12, 2002, their friend Nate had, seemingly out of the blue, traveled to the Military Entrance Processing Station in Columbus, Ohio, and enlisted in the Marines.

★★★★★

AFTER THE FIRST shots, at 10:18 P.M., Alrosa Villa employee Emili Lewis fled the club to call the police. Before Gale could fire again, stagehand

Erin Halk and security guard Jeff Thompson rushed him from opposite sides. There were several sharp reports, like firecrackers. Thompson was shot twice in the body and once in the leg; Halk took bullets in the hand and leg, and four in the chest. Both fell to the floor, fatally wounded.

Damageplan's vocalist, Patrick Lachman, yelled, "Call 911!" into his microphone, then jumped offstage. Bouncers and

fans came rushing from the wings and over the barricades, flooding onto the stage to either help Dimebag or rush Gale. The scuffle moved to the right, behind the wall of amplifiers.

Gale shot Damageplan's tour manager, Chris Paluska, in the stomach, and then drum tech John "Kat" Brooks. In the tumult, Gale dropped his glasses and asked a stunned Jeff Greene from the opening band, Twelve Gauge, to help find them, gesturing downward with the pistol and then firing—possibly by accident—inches from Greene. His clip spent, Gale calmly ejected it and pulled a fresh one from his pocket.

Nathan Bray, 24, among the fans trying to help Dimebag, was administering CPR when he stopped, turned around and looked at Gale. He put both arms out, palms up, his gesture asking, "What the fuck, dude?" Gale slapped the new clip in and shot Bray in the chest, killing him.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LIFE IN THE Marines didn't do much to transform Gale. If anything, it seems to have pushed him closer to the edge. He struggled to meet the weight requirements and was constantly getting chewed out by his instructors: "Every time we heard someone getting yelled at, it was 'Gale, Gale,'" says Lance Cpl. Michael Lemire, a 22-year-old Marine supply clerk who attended boot camp and served his first six months of active duty with Gale. "If he got yelled at, you'd see him off talking to himself. He talked to himself a lot." It wasn't long before other marines began joking that Gale would be the one to go *Full Metal Jacket* someday.

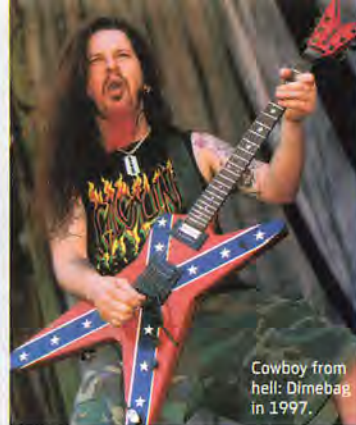
After basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, Lemire, Gale and the other graduates from their class headed to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for additional combat training—everything from using an M-16 to throwing a hand grenade. After that, Gale went to a specialist auto mechanic school, where he could often be found in the rec center, playing videogames and jabbering to himself.

"If you talked to him face-to-face, he was always polite," says Lemire. And while Gale never spent any time in the brig, he did get administrative punishment twice in the months leading up to his discharge. "It wasn't so much that he was a troublemaker," Lemire remembers. "He just wasn't all there—up there."

But he did pass his physical fitness and marksmanship tests and, on April 1, 2003, was promoted to lance corporal. But only seven months later, in November—less than halfway through his four-year commitment, and in the middle of a war—Gale was given an involuntary "administrative

DIMEBAG 101

THE LATE PANTERA
GUITARIST "DIMEBAG" DARRELL ABBOTT'S
FIVE GREATEST SOLOS



Cowboy from hell: Dimebag in 1997.

1 "CEMETERY GATES"

FROM *OFFICIAL LIVE: 101 PROOF* (ELEKTRA, 1997)

Dime's guitar wails like it just lost a loved one on his most sweeping, emotive solo. Live, he ratchets up the intensity on the band's first crossover hit, sprinting from a bluesy lament to power-picking fast enough to cause wind burn.

SOUNDS LIKE: BLARBLARSNEEEEWICKYWICKYRIIIIIIIWAAANG

2 "RISE"

FROM *VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER* (ELEKTRA, 1992)

A highlight of Pantera's best, biggest-selling album, Dime's whammy bar earns overtime pay as he races from one crescendo to the next, leaving listeners feeling like the dude getting his face caved in on the album cover.

SOUNDS LIKE: WAHWAHWAHSQUIDDLYBIDDLYPLEEEENAAAAAR

3 "PSYCHO HOLIDAY"

FROM *COWBOYS FROM HELL* (ELEKTRA, 1990)

One of Dime's longest, most athletic runs. At nearly a full minute, this joyride up and down the fretboard first established him as a nouveau guitar god.

SOUNDS LIKE: SNAARNNINNYNNYREEEEWOCKAWOCKAWEEEEE

4 "WALK"

FROM *VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER* (ELEKTRA, 1992)

Dime stretches notes like wet taffy on this live favorite that's the band's most covered tune. Here, Darrell's wrist-spraining acrobatics result in a slippery, slobbering freakout.

SOUNDS LIKE: RAAAAARWIGGITYWIGGITYSKREEEEEWAAAAH

5 "GODDAMN ELECTRIC"

FROM *REINVENTING THE STEEL* (ELEKTRA, 2000)

A pissing contest between Dimebag and Slayer's Kerry King in which the former wields his axe like a Louisville Slugger. Preposterously fleet and fluid, this work-up on Pantera's final LP left no doubt about who speed metal's alpha-male guitarist was.

SOUNDS LIKE: WOOOZEEREENUTTAPUTTABLEEEEBLAAAR

JASON BRACELIN

discharge" from the Corps. (The military declined to discuss the grounds for Gale's dismissal, citing privacy concerns.)

Discharged from the Marines, with no financial support—and no obligation to seek treatment—Gale returned to Marysville. When Hughes asked him why he'd been discharged, he just giggled. "I said, 'Well, did you like it?' and he says, 'Not really—but I learned how to blow stuff up. Got to shoot a rocket launcher and some guns.'" Hughes remembers, "It did make me feel weird, because he said it with that kind of Nate giggle—and he was the last person you want to teach how to blow shit up."

Gale moved into a three-room apartment on Fifth Street, half a block from M&M Pawn and Loan—where he often checked out old PlayStation 2 games. He shared the apartment with his mom as he tried to get on his feet. Soon after his dis-

charge, the Veteran's Administration placed him with a job at the Minit Lube, whose boss, Rich Cencula, tried to mentor him.

"He was an average kid," Cencula says. "Later he confided to me that he'd been discharged because of schizophrenia. I asked him if he was taking medication for it and he said yes." But Gale never missed any work, and got along well with everyone: "He was great with customers' kids." Cencula got Gale interested in hockey and started taking him to Blue Jackets games.

Gale's new interest in sports drew him to try out for the local semi-pro football team, the Lima Thunder, where the coach remembers him as an undistinguished left guard but a goofy, good-natured presence.

In the fall of 2004, Gale's mother left the apartment they shared to move in with a boyfriend, leaving him responsible for →

the full rent. The need for more funds, plus his desire to keep free his Saturdays—Minit Lube's busiest day—so that he could compete in football games led him to quit his job. He took another at Davey's Tree Service, then another washing trucks. He was fired from that in November of last year for poor job performance.

His last attempt at employment was applying for a bouncer position at the local sports bar and music venue, Lee Dog's Locker Room. On the application form, he listed his stint with the Marines, said that he had a brown belt in judo and wrote that he could start work on December 6—two days before the murders.



THE BEAR'S DEN tattoo shop is on Fifth Street in Marysville, across the street from Gale's apartment. Gale started coming to the Bear's Den during his final stay in Marysville. First he got a tribal tattoo on his forearm and an ear-piercing. Then he began to hang out in the small store, with its biker gear and goth accoutrements, flipping through magazines, listening to death metal. "I think he was trying to find a group he could fit in to," says Lucas Bender, the manager. "I think that was his problem. I figure he was still trying to fit in."

At the Bear's Den, Bender says he often caught Gale staring off into space, or zoning out on a security camera. "He was spooky, but polite and easygoing when you talked to him," Bender recalls. That was until one afternoon, on December 8, when Gale was sitting on a chair against the wall, flipping through a tattoo magazine. He asked Bo Toller, a tattoo artist at the shop, how he might be able to purchase a tattoo machine, to take up the trade on his own.

"I started telling him about how you need to have a license to have that sort of equipment," Toller remembers. And Gale became infuriated. "He threw the magazine



Pieces of the puzzle: Top, Gale's apartment on Fifth Street in Marysville; Lance Cpl. Gale before his discharge, 2003.

Nathan Gale had endured in his 25 years culminated in a single act of retribution. "And in his mind," says Meloy, "he had a right to do this."



WAVING THE BERETTA, Gale backed away from the bodies and behind the wall of amplifiers. While fans and crew were trying to save the wounded, several police officers had sto-

average three weapons," says Dr. Meloy. As fans screamed and cops were pointing out Gale, Niggemeyer stepped out of the stage door with his shotgun raised. He moved around the drum set and fired at Gale's face. Gale fell to the floor, dead.

"I had to do it," Niggemeyer said—to witnesses, to himself—as Gale lay by the stage. "I had to do it."

By 11 P.M. on December 8, five people in the Alrosa Villa were dead, two wounded, and 400 left to make sense of what they'd witnessed. An oft-repeated Web posting called it "the worst day in metal history." But this is far from evoking the strangeness of that night. "The whole

thing seems so surreal," says Emili Lewis. "You keep thinking you're going to wake up."

In one of the two interviews she gave, Gale's mother, Mary Clark—who later received death threats—said she couldn't explain her son's actions. "Nothing I say about him is going to erase what happened in the end, in those few minutes," she said. "I'm sorry for what happened, I'm sorry for those people who were killed, but I lost a son, too."

Now, just about a month after the night, Ryan Hughes sits at a diner in Marysville, sipping a cup of coffee and reflecting.

"In a way, he was just like any of us," he says of Gale, stroking a scruff of beard. "He just had this ... problem. Nate was just so big and so tweaky and so weird nobody wanted to deal with him."

Before Gale's body was cremated in a private ceremony, an autopsy by the Franklin County Coroner's office showed no trace of drugs in his system, antipsychotic or otherwise. He came to the Alrosa Villa driven by nothing but his own private demons.

Drugs didn't make Nate Gale a killer. Nor did metal, divorce, guns or some other single bugaboo. Nobody could have seen it coming, even if now, at least to some friends, all the pieces fit.

"When I heard the news, I was totally shocked, but not surprised," says Hughes. "I mean, you knew Nate wasn't gonna stop until he ... did something. The music, the football, the military—he wasn't gonna just lay down and not be anybody." [BLENDER]

Additional reporting by C. Mark Brinkley of the Marine Corps Times and Chad Williamson of the Marysville Journal-Tribune.

IF ANYTHING, JOINING THE MARINES

down, said 'Bullshit—you're a liar!' and walked right out. It surprised me. He never showed anybody his temper before." Hours later, Gale was on the evening news.

A mass murder is almost always provoked by a single triggering event—something that happens hours or, at most, days before the killing. "It's typically a rejection or a public humiliation," says Reid Meloy. "[The murderer] is taking revenge against all those individuals who have hurt and mistreated him for as long as he can remember."

All of the slights and failures that

PUSHED GALE CLOSER TO THE EDGE

len into the club from various entrances. Officer James D. Niggemeyer, 31, having entered through the back door, came sneaking up alongside the main speakers holding a Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun.

As cops closed in, Gale grabbed drum tech John Brooks, whom he had shot twice in the leg, and tried to use him as a shield. Having fired at least 17 times, he had five rounds left in the pistol and more in his pockets. For a mass murderer he was, in fact, lightly armed. "These guys



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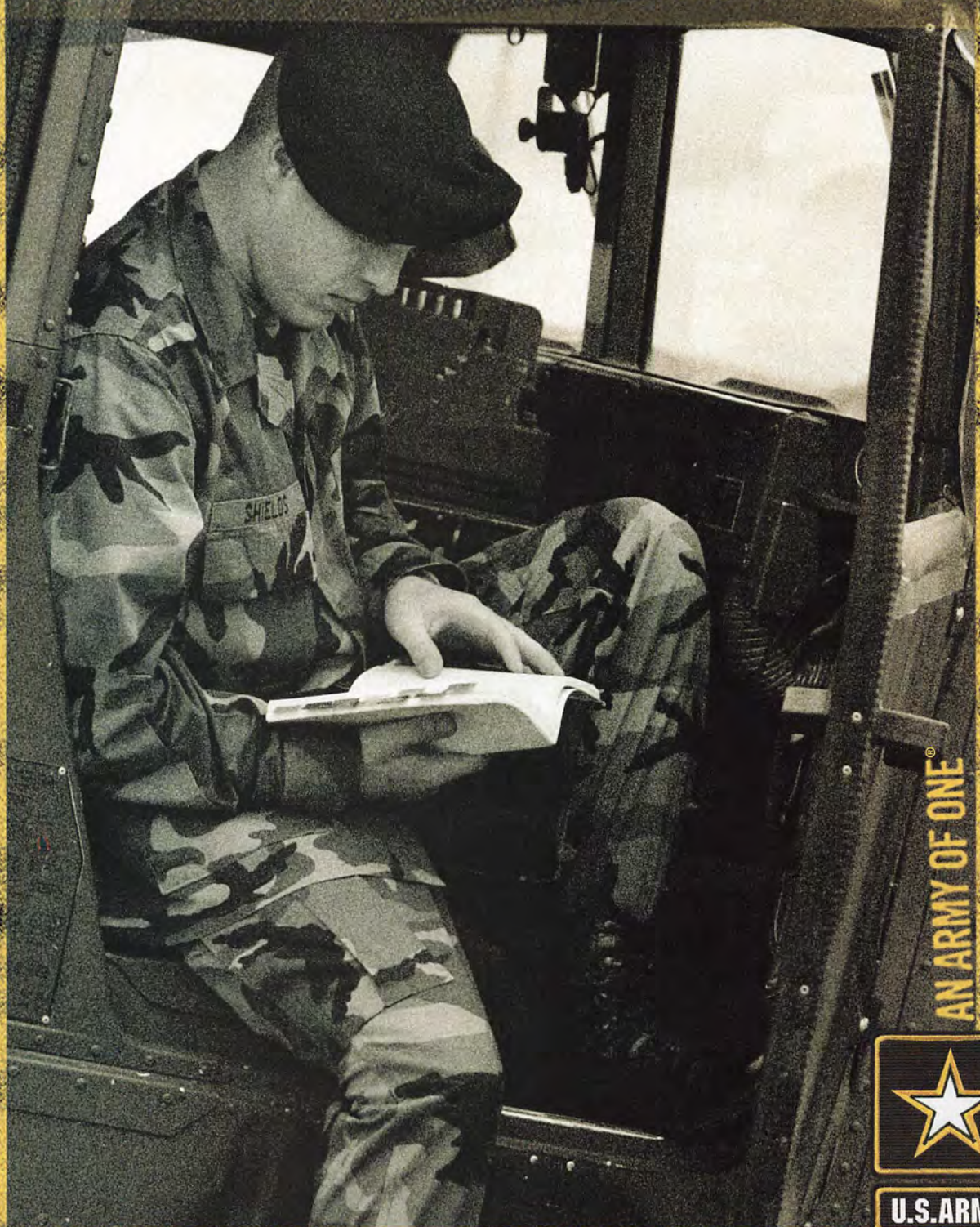
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I'M GETTING A LOT OF THINGS OUT OF COLLEGE. DEBT JUST ISN'T ONE OF THEM.



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116

50 CENT

With a new mansion and a hit about lollipops, has Curtis Jackson gone soft on his new album?

★★★★



118

MARIAH CAREY

Before she went bizzonkers, Mariah Carey was known mostly as an R&B singer. That girl is back.

★★★★



128

THE EAGLES

A career-spanning box explores money, power and sex—L.A. rock that would make Jay-Z proud.

★★★

THE GUIDE

THEY MAKE 'EM. WE REVIEW 'EM

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ASHLEE SIMPSON

On her first tour ever, the MTV starlet tries to live down the dreaded L word—"lip-sync," that is

Hot Hot Heat:
Paul Hawley,
Dustin Hawthorne,
Luke Paquin
and Steve Bays.

HOT HOT IN HERE

These witty, dapper Canadians have made the breakout rock record of 2005

HOT HOT HEAT
ELEVATOR

★★★★

WARNER BROS.

DUST OFF YOUR rhyming dictionaries—the new Age of Wit is here. The first one, in the seventeenth century, featured satirists in velvet and ruffles skewering popes and monarchs. Today's Age of Wit involves rockers in Beatles or David Bowie haircuts and skinny neckties (and occasionally velvet or ruffles) screwing with gender, class and style.

From the Dandy Warhols to the Killers to Franz Ferdinand to new upstarts Hot Hot Heat, rock wits are doing their best to erase the mark of stern sincerity left by the sons and daughters of indie rock and reinstate the essentials as dictated by swells Mick Jagger and Bryan Ferry: sexy-sharp rhythms, smart lyrics and blessed arrogance.

A Wit (as opposed to a twit, like that guy from Three Doors Down) doesn't even pretend to believe in being real. When Hot Hot Heat take us to "The Island of the Honest Man" on their second album, *Elevator*, it's not an end point; it's an upside-down fantasy worthy of Gulliver's travels. The guitar runs through a set of Devo chord changes as singer/keyboardist Steven Bays rhymes "common cause" with "kamikaze." HHH certainly sound genuine here—genuinely intent on besting the competition, that is, with sharper hooks, funnier one-liners, tighter beats and whatever else it takes to dominate starlets' iPods.

On "Running Out of Time," Bays describes the world his band lives in: overeducated girls pretending to be artists, actor/waiters serving lattes to vacuous screenplay writers, a sports star with a trophy wife and delusions of grandeur. The song, powered by the agile rimshots of drummer (and co-songwriter) Paul Hawley, establishes the mood of frantic precision that carries *Elevator* through to its piano-haunted, riff-strewn finale, where Bays imagines his future as an endless ride on an automatic lift.

Throughout, Bays has a tone of disbelief at his surroundings—namely Los Angeles, where these Canadian boys recorded this major-label debut, though it's also today's global culture of cellphone loneliness and instant-message isolation. "Self-appointed sheriff of a popular ghost town," he yelps in "Running Out of Time," "I'm

open to bribes but I've arrested no one." Bays waives his judgments as soon as he makes them—"pickin' it up but then I put it back down," as he puts it elsewhere, in a song that sounds like the Clash minus the earnestness (which is minus a lot).

Bays doesn't want to judge the phonies around him the way Joe Strummer did; he wants to satirize them, and, as any wag knows, the closer you get to someone, the more effective your barbs are. His lyrics focus on moments of human fakery. A

nice guy dumps a plastic princess in "Goodnight Goodnight," a jubilant, dazzling single; a charlatan insinuates

himself with the smart set in the Bowie-by-way-of-Blur rave-up "Ladies and Gentlemen"; on the nicer side, the art of pretending seems to lead to some tasty phone sex in "Dirty Mouth."

Bays's banter is a constant game of faking the listener out—he can't resist a pun, a twisted homonym, a deliciously turned phrase. His brainiac gamesmanship reaches a peak on the irresistible tongue twister "You Owe Me an I.O.U." In the past, Bays has let his love of verbal gymnastics invade

his singing style, but here he treats his wobbly tenor like an instrument, unleashing its quirks at just the right intervals.

On other bursting highlights like "Middle of Nowhere," Hot Hot Heat take an Olympic leap from their fast and dirty 2002 debut, *Make Up the Breakdown*. They share with peers like the Killers and Franz Ferdinand the notion that crafting music actually makes it better, especially on that soon-to-be-outmoded instrument, the radio. *Elevator* has the zing of classic pop—

and its sureness too. Bays's singing is elastic, not spastic, and the band works together to sink each hook. Such vicious precision

is what turns a smartypants into a virtuoso.

That's why *Elevator*, recorded over six weeks with Dave Sardy, who has worked with Wit Rock pioneers the Dandy Warhols and Blur, has a fine chance of being this season's sensation.

It's tight, it's sharp, it's in all the right colors. At least for now, it's the real thing.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "You Owe Me an I.O.U.," "Pickin' It Up," "Dirty Mouth"

ELEVATOR COULD BE THIS
SEASON'S ROCK
SENSATION.

TALES FROM THE STUDIO

HOT HOT HEAT SINGER **STEVE BAYS** REVEALS THE UPS AND DOWNS BEHIND THE MAKING OF *ELEVATOR*



WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENED
"Sound City and Larrabee East, Los Angeles; July–October 2004"

OUR RECORD IS ABOUT
"Hating being young, but not wanting to grow up."

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, ELEVATOR'S DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
"An 8.9—emotionally it was tough. Our guitarist, Dante DeCaro, left the band while we were halfway through the recording."

STUDIO HIJINKS
"We crank-called restaurants with the Dr. Phil soundboard and posted the calls on our Web site."

MOST OUTRAGEOUS RECORDING TACTIC
"For 'Soldier in a Box,' we wanted a weird piano effect. First we put CD cases on the strings to get a clackity sound, but

eventually we just lit the whole thing on fire. It was a recoupable expense."

PETS/LOVED ONES WHO PASSED AWAY DURING PRODUCTION
"Our drummer Paul's grandmother died. And Dante's dog—that was a rough one."

RECORD WE LISTENED TO/ UNABASHEDLY RIPPED OFF
"'You Owe Me an I.O.U.' was influenced by 'Chicken Payback' by the Bees, a band from Liverpool. Tom Petty recorded his first album in our

studio, so we tried for an organ sound like that."

THE MONEY SPENT RECORDING THIS ALBUM COULD BUY
"A Lamborghini Countach, back in its heyday. We talked about that a lot."

MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPERS
"A lot of caffeine all day, a lot of Berenger Merlot at night."

HAZING THE PRODUCER
"At first, we told Dave Sardy we didn't want to work with him, partly to see how badly he wanted the job. In the meantime, he rescheduled his wedding and wound up canceling his honeymoon to do our album. Looking at it now, that wasn't too cool of us."

THE HATERS WILL SAY
"The album doesn't breathe, it's just too unrelenting. But that was the point—we wanted a neurotic vibe."

STEVE KANDELL



THE SCORE

★★★★★

A CLASSIC

★★★★

GREAT

★★★

GOOD

★★

MEDIocre

★

FOUL

THE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA

ATOM BOMB ★★★

REALWORLD

Long-burning gospel masters collaborate with musicians half their age

When you've been singing traditional gospel for 60-odd years, your audience either dies off or moves on to trendier sacred music. So the

Blind Boys of Alabama have diversified. They appeared in the award-winning 1983 Broadway musical *Gospel at Colonus*; more recently, they've recorded with Tom Waits and Lou Reed and covered such sacred-tinged secular material as the Rolling Stones' "I Just Want to See His Face." And though they could have done worse—Reed and Waits have similarly worn voices and moody sensibilities—you wouldn't listen twice. But this mix of gospel classics ("Old Blind Barnabas") and classic-rock clunkers (Norman Greenbaum's "Spirit in the Sky") turns out to be a surprise keeper. In his mid-70s, lead singer Clarence Fountain isn't the powerhouse he was, but he still owns one of the richest voices anywhere. David Hidalgo of Los Lobos on guitar and Beatles sideman Billy Preston on organ funk up the proceedings. And thank guest rapper Gift of Gab for the best track, a scary, churning version of the Fatboy Slim/Macy Gray song "Demons." The mix isn't oil and water, but rather pure wine.

DAVID GATES

DOWNLOAD: "Demons," "I Know I've Been Converted"



Caesars:
"Et tu, you guys?"

BRITISH SEA POWER

OPEN SEASON ★★★★★

ROUGH TRADE

Eccentric Brits learn how to write hits. The art-house Coldplay, anyone?

Only British Sea Power would address a song, "Oh Larsen B," to a collapsing ice-shelf in the Antarctic and make it touching rather than arch. The English quartet has a special affinity for the romance of impending doom—it's as if four World War I poets had formed a rock band. BSP's 2003 debut was lauded by Radiohead, David Bowie and the kid who plays Harry Potter; this considerably less prickly follow-up

threatens to break their heroic idiosyncrasy big. At once accessible and otherworldly, *Open Season* sounds as if it was recorded on a howling moor in January. From stirring opener "It Ended on an Oily Stage" to the seagull squawks that conclude the elegiac "True Adventures," it swells with grace and intrigue.

DORIAN LYNSEY

DOWNLOAD: "It Ended on an Oily Stage," "Please Stand Up," "The Land Beyond"

CAESARS

PAPER TIGERS ★★★★★

ASTRALWERKS

Second U.S. release from Sweden's foremost retro-rock iPod salesmen

What's most enviable about the Swedes? Universal healthcare? Stunning blondes? Or their uncanny ability to produce great pop at a ridiculous clip? Caesars (called Caesars Palace at home) improve upon the retro-glorious blueprint drafted by countrymen the Hives and the Cardigans. Unlike either band, singer Cesar Vidal and guitarist Jocke Ahlund don't have an ironic or icy bone in their bodies: This set overflows with heart and hooks. "It's

BLOOD SUGAR

Gangsta's pinup tries to prove he hasn't softened

50 CENT

THE MASSACRE ★★★★★

SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE

50 CENT HAS all the conscience of a shell casing. He raps gleefully about murder and mutilation. There's a bullet lodged in his tongue. But, boy, is he cuddly!

In the late '80s, gangstas were scary. N.W.A and Tupac threatened to spill black rage across the suburbs, seducing white kids by terrorizing them and, more important, their parents. But 50's a gangsta post-Jay-Z, where rap isn't a means to destroy oppressors; it's a means to go legal and jump five tax brackets.

Jay-Z fancied himself a complex, subversive capitalist, but on *The Massacre*, 50 Cent is a straight-up salesman—and he's good at it. The lead single, "Candy Shop," is full of bass-heavy club-bage and menace you can dance to. "Just a Little Bit" is menace you can sex to. "So Amazing" has no menace, just the promise of orgasms and considerate phone calls the day after.

But 50's signature talent isn't that he switches between tough talk and sweet talk. It's that his tough talk itself sounds sweet, a trick he perfected on *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*. "Clickety-clank, clickety-clank! The money goes into my piggy bank," he nursery-rhymes on "Piggy Bank," a track meant to prove his hardness. On "In My Hood" he filters gritty 'hood tableaux through a syrupy singsong. Overseen by Dr. Dre, the album is hook-heavy. "Disco Inferno" flaunts a nagging flute, while "Ski Mask Way" works a blissful soul-funk loop.

No matter how many gunshot FX fire, or how many taunts 50 growls, there's something tidy and theatrical about him. He represents gangsta rap's evolution into pure entertainment. One frightening moment slips through, though. On "A Baltimore Love Thing," 50 raps as heroin, serenading a female addict he's slowly destroying. It's ingenious, conflicted, cruel and, unlike any other track here, hard to listen to.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "In My Hood," "Disco Inferno"

50 Cent: "Dear God, please don't let me get shot another nine times."



Faith Evans cleverly disguises her eye patch.



Fat Joe: "It's called slow metabolism!"



Not the Fall That Hurts" and "We Got to Leave" are the best songs the Kinks never wrote, while irresistible, Farfisa-fueled frugs like "Jerk It Out" (heard in an omnipresent iPod ad) give the stunning blondes a run for their money.

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOAD: "My Heart Is Breaking Down," "We Got to Leave," "Soul Chaser"

FAITH EVANS

THE FIRST LADY ***

CAPITOL

Former gangsta moll flips into Oprah-worthy tales of overcoming adversity

Faith Evans opens her intermittently great fourth album in the role of a wronged girlfriend who's wised up: "I should be startin' a new life," she vows on the sly, vintage-R&B-sounding Neptunes production "Goin' Out." This is an extreme celebrity makeover, with Evans rejiggering her sordid autobiography (she was the

cheated-on wife of rapper Notorious B.I.G. when he was murdered in 1997) into heartwarming tales of learning from mistakes and overcoming adversity. She sharpens her delivery to match the Woman on the Rebound narratives—filling "Again" with fiery resolve or admitting that she's "Jealous" and prone to scanning her man's caller I.D. Though she brings poise to the (alas) generic Quiet Storm ballads, Evans shines brightest when she's fully agitated—as on the James Brown homage "Mesmerized," a screaming, time-scrambling gem that is easily the most exciting thing she's recorded.

TOM MOON

DOWNLOAD: "Mesmerized," "Again," "Jealous"

FAT JOE

ALL OR NOTHING ***

ATLANTIC

On sixth album, Joey Crack turns Joey Wack—A-list producers hold him up, barely



For beat junkies, there's much to relish here: hopping party tracks by Scott Storch and Swizz Beatz, Lil

Jon's terror-synth remix of Joe's No. 1 hit with Terror Squad, "Lean Back," and Timbaland's latest stroke of genius, "Everybody Get Up," which does mind-blowing things with little more than siren and timpani. The problem with the new Fat Joe album is, well, Fat Joe. Once the Bronx's most formidable battle-rhymer, he's become a diva accessory (see the J. Lo duet "Hold You Down") and a spewer of witless tough-guy couplets ("Lemme tell you the difference between a victim and a killer/A victim get shot, a killer pull the trigger"). Perhaps his recent beef with 50 Cent will light a fire under Joe. Until then, it's all about the instrumentals.

JODY ROSEN

DOWNLOAD: "Everybody Get Up," "Lean Back (Remix)"

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"I can't stop listening to it—it's just too brilliant. My eardrums are bleeding because I have to listen to it very loud."

Mariah: Battling ex-lovers, split ends.



NO MORE DRAMA

Pop's biggest showoff mellows out

MARIAH CAREY

THE EMANCIPATION OF MIMI ★★★★

ISLAND



FOR THE PAST decade and a half, Mariah Carey's voice has been pop's most fearsome sound. It has gusted across octaves, climbed to crystalware-shattering heights and shamelessly embellished any melody it's encountered with two dozen notes where just a few would suffice.

It has transformed R&B and soft rock, inspired a million delusional *American Idol* contestants, struck terror into the hearts of lesser divas and for all we know may even be the reason that a sickly-looking Whitney Houston was recently seen prostrating herself before the Wailing Wall in

Jerusalem. "Jehovah, please bless me with an extra octave, that I might vanquish Mariah!"

But on Carey's tenth studio album, something strange occurs: The Voice goes AWOL. After a much-publicized meltdown, a stint in rehab and a feature film debut more embarrassing than Britney Spears's, Carey has reinvented her music. She's curbed her showboating instincts, reined in her signature melisma and for the first time treated songs as something other than dragons to be slain. The result invites adjectives that in the past were unthinkable with her—restrained, relaxed, subtle—and sets the gold standard for diva records in 2005.

The mood is established right away, with the Jermaine Dupri-produced single "It's Like That." It's a spare club bumper—the verses feature little more than a thudding bass-drum and the odd old-school ping—that

opens up into a lilting chorus: "It's my night/No stress/No fights/I'm leaving it all behind." Here's the part where the old Carey would have unleashed a terrifying, ululating, highly stressful series of vocal variations on the theme of stress-free living. But she lays back, content to croon, and the song glides enchantingly past.

SHE'S IN TOUCH WITH HER INNER THUG.

The whole album is like that: You keep waiting for the '90s MOR queen to rear her big-haired head, but she rarely does. "We Belong Together," another Dupri track, begins with a little fake-out: some plaintive piano chords and a few bars of feathery warbling. But then a ticking beat kicks in, and Carey starts spilling out lyrics in the clipped, modern cadences of Beyoncé and R. Kelly. Carey even proves she can do breakneck with the best of

them; on "One and Only" she actually outpaces guest rapper Twista, who is hip-hop's land-speed king.

Carey has recorded several memorable collaborations with rappers over the years, but here she succumbs definitively to the power of dope beats. She's hired production ringers (Kanye West, the Neptunes, underground comer Scram Jones) and hooked up with some of the world's most dependable good-time MCs, including Snoop Dogg and Nelly, who trades singsong verses with her on the funky "To the Floor."

And she's gotten in touch with her inner thug. The woman who once jostled with Celine Dion for lite-radio supremacy coos to Snoop about how she wants to "fuck," gripes about her "mother-fucker" ex-boyfriend, and boasts about her "pimp penthouse with a sick-ass hot tub."

But the real revelation is the ballads, which swerve surprisingly toward neo-soul. "Mine Again" and "I Wish You Knew" mix woodwinds, keyboards, wah-wah and breezy backing vocals into a sumptuous '70s-style blend. You can't help but suspect that Carey's newfound moderation is due at least in part to an immersion in the music of that more humble age. Nothing like a steady diet of Marvin Gaye to set a gal straight.

Of course, *Mimi* is not utterly bombast-free. The album closes with "Fly Like a Bird," a huge gospel song spiked with spoken-word samples of the preacher at Carey's Brooklyn church. It's clearly a personal song, and it builds and builds, climaxing with whooping shout-outs to Jesus, while Carey lets fly a series of vocal runs as flamboyant and unheeded as

anything she's ever put on record. She'd been saving it up all album long, and she's earned the right to let rip.

JODY ROSEN

DOWNLOAD: "It's Like That," "Say Somethin'," "Mine Again"

MARIAH CAREY'S CURRENT LISTENING

KIERRA "KIKI" SHEARD
I OWE YOU EMI GOSPEL

MINNIE RIPPERTON
PERFECT ANGEL CAPITOL

THE GAME

WEST COAST RESURRECTION ★★★

GET LOW

Unreleased 2002 album from G-Unit's Compton Correspondent

GANGSTA
RAP
GOES TO
THERAPY

Jayceon Taylor is 2005's rap success story, even if his debut owed much of its greatness to Dr.

Dre's lush tracks and 50 Cent's singsong hooks. But this collection, recorded with Bay Area veteran JT the Bigga Figga, proves Game had game long before he met Dre. This is a quickie cash-in (Game barely appears on several tracks) but a good one. The beats are low-rent but effective G-Funk, and a cast of talented unknowns (Nina B, Sky Balla) make up for the scarcity of actual Game verses. Game drops some clunkers ("I'm a dog but my name ain't Rover"), but his self-assured bark and hungry desperation are in full effect—whether he's talking guns or eviscerating his abusive father.

TOM BREIHAN

DOWNLOAD: "Promised Land," "Put It in the Air"

GARBAGE

BLEED LIKE ME ★★★

GEFFEN

Tech-born band makes the best of a now old-fashioned sound

Garbage was decadence-tech, grunge's sun going down in digital flames, built around the bruised-starlet yowls of Shirley Manson and the hyper-pristine production of drummer/Nirvana producer Butch Vig. A decade and four albums on, they sound like just another rock band. The thing is, they're a fine rock band. Manson's still half angel/half fish and all Chrissie Hynde with a computer chip on her shoulder, as on "Run Baby Run"; her winsome charisma has endured. Meanwhile, the songs' splinter 'n' suture assembly language is no longer innovative but can still be thrillingly shifty; "Your Love Me" turns on a dime so many times there's only a nickel left

I LOVE THIS CD!



HALLE BERRY
ACTRESS,
MONSTER'S BALL,
CATWOMAN

JOHN LEGEND
GET GIFTED
SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA

"I love the whole thing. He has such a gorgeous voice. I get in the bathtub and I don't get out until the CD is done."

Goldie Lookin' Chain audition for Malibu's Most Wanted 2.



GOLDIE LOOKIN' CHAIN

STRAIGHT OUT OF NEWPORT ★★★

RECORD COLLECTION

Drug-humor-infused debut from big-in-the-U.K. rap collective

The country of Wales is not famed for producing great rappers—and Goldie Lookin' Chain will in no way change that. Their CD boasts not "rapping" so much as "drunken shouting," while its breakbeats tend to the prehistoric. But what makes the eight-man GLC distinctive, and has delivered them massive success in the U.K., is a mile-wide streak of crude stoner humor, as demonstrated by lyrics like "Suicide is painless/And it's 80% sure to make you famous/Wanking with a bag on your head tied to a door/That bloke from INXS, he knew the score." The references to soccer and British game shows may baffle, but anyone who can keep a completely straight face while listening to the hilarious Eric Clapton-sampling "Your Mother's Got a Penis" has a very poor sense of humor—or a mother with a penis.

CLARK COLLIS

DOWNLOAD: "Guns Don't Kill People, Rappers Do." →

over. It's a bargain for a gang hanging on past their sell-by date.

RENE VIENET

DOWNLOAD: "Run Baby Run," "Boys Wanna Fight"

THE GO-BETWEENS

OCEANS APART ★★★

YEP ROC

If two Australian librarians had a great rock band ...

Perhaps the reason Australia's Go-Betweens managed to mount a successful comeback in 2000 is because so few people noticed they were gone to begin with—their six albums of literate indie pop won over many critics during the 1980s, plus acolytes like Belle and Sebastian, but

not many fans. Amazingly, their third post-breakup offering, *Oceans Apart*, is their most welcome yet. Songwriters and mainstays Robert Forster and Grant McLennan (joined by a new-read younger-rhythm section) are still Yin to the other's Yang—Forster's "Here Comes a City" is arch and dreamy while McLennan's "Statue" is soft and creamy—and, as always, they split the disc, with five songs each. But the album is wonderfully cohesive, swollen with strings, longing and instantly memorable choruses. Even if you've never missed the Go-Betweens, you'll be glad to have them back.

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOAD: "Here Comes a City," "Born to a Family," "Statue"

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NIRVANA

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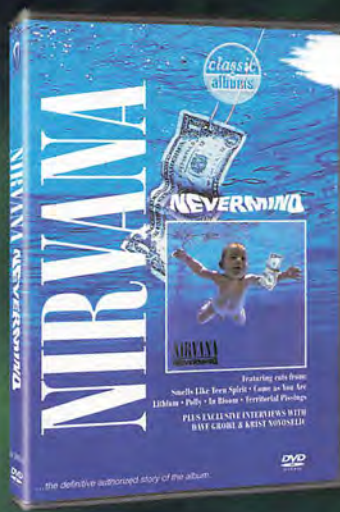


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Beanie Sigel:
"No one here
but us foliage."



THE WEEPSTA

Jay-Z's legally embattled homey serves up some Kleenex-hop

BEANIE SIGEL

THE B. COMING ★★

ROC-A-FELLA

WHERE DO THUGS go to cry? Judging by the songs Beanie Sigel made while staring down attempted murder charges, the answer is the soft-rock section of their record collection. Beanie has proved himself one of hip-hop's great depressives, but he out-darks himself on his third album, about as insular and pensive a rap record as anyone's ever made.

The oddity of the subject matter is matched by the oddity of his musical choices. On "Wanted," he frets over hiding from the law at mom's house and slickly plugs his clothing line over the hook from Bon Jovi's "Wanted Dead or Alive." "Oh Daddy," where Beans groans over a fickle woman, borrows from the Fleetwood Mac song of the same name. Stranger still, "Feel It in the Air" and "Tales of a Hustla Pt. 2" compellingly incorporate drowsy sax riffs that sound pilfered straight from '80s cop shows.

When Beanie swaps verses with Redman ("One Shot Deal") and Peedi Crakk and Twista ("Gotta Have It"), he sounds vibrant, even bombastic, but the

joy is short-lived. Most of *The B. Coming* is about claustrophobia, what it feels like to lose faith in others and to be forced inward. The songs teem with fair-weather friends, unreliable women and naysayers. The sadness sears on the elegant, Sam Cooke-quoting "Change," which creeps along like a 25-to-life bid, and on "Lord Have Mercy," where Beanie prays for another loner, R. Kelly.

The album's most optimistic moment is also one of its quietest. "Don't Stop"—produced by the Neptunes and featuring Snoop Dogg—boasts narcotic Tron synths and a

recurring Snoop toast to Beanie's brighter future. Beanie may well be the first artist to ever pen his own

welcome-home song before even beginning his jail sentence. "My jumpsuit and cuffs is off," Sigel boasts at song's end. "Raise your cups." Finally, it's time to get happy. Maybe.

JON CARAMANICA

DOWNLOAD: "Gotta Have It," "Wanted"

BEANIE SIGEL'S CURRENT LISTENING

RAEKWON
ONLY BUILT 4 CUBAN LINX LOUD

THE LOX
MONEY, POWER & RESPECT BAD BOY

THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES

HEARTLESS BASTARDS

STAIRS AND ELEVATORS

★★★

FAT POSSUM

Striking female songwriter, 27, confronts her demons at maximum volume

When Erika Wennerstrom mutters, "I want to laugh and joke and have a smoke and have a good time," it's easy to sympathize with her sentiment, because she sounds so uptight. Between her stiff delivery and tendency to cram too many words into one line, this Catholic high school dropout from Dayton, Ohio, acts as if she's prepping for a poetry slam, or practicing English as a second language. But Wennerstrom's tense persona, fortified by the simple hard-rock riffs of her churning guitar and a banging rhythm section, proves oddly compelling. Whether flipping off the world in "New Resolution" or crafting a desolate cover of the late bluesman Junior Kimbrough's "Done Got Old," Wennerstrom projects a grim resolve that might be the ideal approach for these bumpy times.

JON YOUNG

DOWNLOAD: "New Resolution," "The Will Song"

JESU

JESU ★★

HYDRA HEAD

A grindcore patriarch gets slow and ecstatic

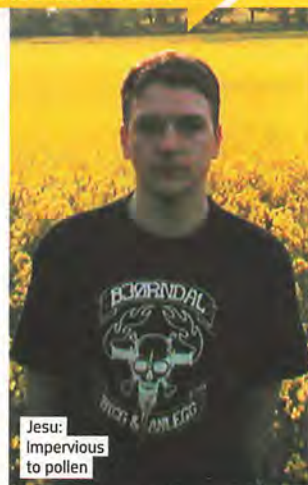


Justin Broadrick, the English guitarist and bassist who has recorded for 20 years with Godflesh,

Napalm Death and Techno Animal, has a sound in his head. It is full, abrasive and cathartic, and the end of a track is merely a formality; he thinks in much greater lengths of fuzz. In his old, grindcore days, his music could ignite anger and clear a room. But Broadrick turns more contemplative with Jesu. Mostly a collaboration with drummer Ted Parsons, their debut is superslow, chiming, echoey, trance-inducing, with guitars and overdriven keyboards letting one dirty chord ring on at length; on top of all the buzz and smoke, Broadrick sings his torpid poetry. But the swelling grandeur of songs like "Friends Are Evil" and "Tired of Me" suggest My Bloody Valentine's blissed-out pop drone; this isn't only for middle-aged grindcore extremists.

BEN RATLIFF

DOWNLOAD: "Your Path to Divinity," "Tired of Me"



Jesu:
Impervious
to pollen

KONONO NO. 1

LUBUAKU ★★

TERP

CONGOTRONICS ★★

CRAMMED DISCS

Old Congolese guys with thumb-pianos and spare auto parts who rock like mad

Fronted by septuagenarian likembé ("thumb-piano") master Mingiedi Mawangu, Konono No. 1 is a roof-shaking dance band from Congo that has finally released its first CDs after

25 years. There's not a lot

of variety in their repertoire—more than half of their songs are powered by the same monomaniacal two-note riff—but they've got an incredible sound, built around three likembes with electronics jury-rigged from car parts blasting through nastily distorted amps, three drummers hammering at metal percussion and as many singers as will fit onstage. *Lubuaku* is a rough but thrilling live recording from a February 2003 Holland gig that was their first show outside Africa; *Congotronics*, recorded at home in Kinshasa, smoothes off their rough patches and clarifies the rhythms they juggle between voices, drums and likembé.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: *Lubuaku*: "Zeyisalangayizama"; *Congotronics*: "Mama Liza"

I LOVE THIS CD!



MIGUEL SANDOVAL
ACTOR, JURASSIC PARK, BLOW, GET SHORTY

THE TIGER LILLIES DEATH AND THE BIBLE

MISERY GUTS

"I love them for their theatricality. Martyn Jacques has a very manic voice."

Unsurprisingly, Mu didn't catch many fish that day.



LOUIS XIV THE BEST LITTLE SECRETS ARE KEPT ○○○

ATLANTIC

Sleazy California band whose sleazy songs played during *The O.C.*'s sleazy girl-girl kissing scenes

Galloping sans culottes to the garage-rock frontlines, these four San Diegans come armed with hooks, wit and a sure feel for the styles of Rock à la Decadence. Painstakingly reprising the debauched sonics of T. Rex, Gary Glitter and "Queen Bitch"-era David Bowie, they exult in a catchy send-up of swaggering retro-rock sleaze, given oily flesh by the vocalisms of guitarist and producer Jason Hill. Slurring "Well, I'm a weapon o' mass destruction," he introduces a character somewhere between nasally mush-mouthed Ratso Rizzo and a dissolute British schoolboy, ready to join Jack White on some skanky, late-night cartoon show. As he warns one conquest, "If you want clean fun, go fly a kite." *Vive Le Ro!*

CHRIS NORRIS

DOWNLOAD: "Finding Out True Love Is Blind," "Illegal Tender," "Paper Doll"

LYRICS BORN

**SAME !@#\$, DIFFERENT DAY
○○○**

QUANNUM

Indie rap's Mr. Nice Guy shines on remix set

Don't let Lyrics Born's chivalrous rhymes and upbeat, smiley and generally un-rapper-like disposition fool you—he's out to make a buck just like everyone else. This is a collection of remixes and bonus tracks meant to capitalize on the

slow-growing success of the feel-good Bay Area rapper's 2002 solo debut, *Later That Day*. Thankfully, it isn't a mere reheat-the-leftovers job: A classy array of guest rappers (KRS-One, E-40) and producers (DJ Shadow, DJ Spinna, Morcheeba) helps spruce things up, especially on the spongy, throwback funk of "Callin' Out (Remix)," the creepy hometown shout-out "The Bay" and two remixes of the gritty "I Changed My Mind." Same songs, different arrangements, still funky as !@#\$. **HUA HSU**

DOWNLOAD: "Callin' Out (Remix)," "The Bay"

MF DOOM

LIVE FROM PLANET X ○○○○

NATURE SOUNDS

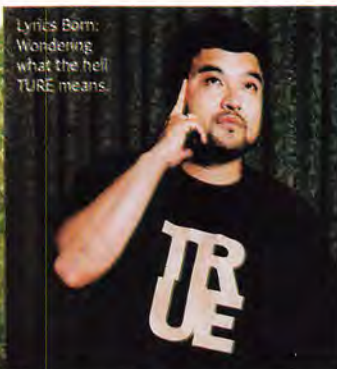
Tireless metal-faced MC drops concert effort between world-domination schemes

It takes some ingenuity to devise a supervillain persona and rap behind a metal mask—it takes even more to come up with a rhyme for "Slobodan Milosevic" ("Slo-mo the con artist with the so-so chick"). An indie weirdo with a gift for head-spinning rhymes, Doom tears up the club here, keeping his casually nimble rhyming intact, if cranked up intensity-wise for better crowd-rockage. He nails shifty lines like "This rhyme flow take practice like Tae Bo/With Billy Blanks/Oh, you're too kind." "Really? Thanks!" ("Rhymes Like Dimes"), while his hazy, soul-derived beats are crackling and hard despite the slightly muddy sound. What's more, he keeps going for 40 minutes straight—practically a U2 gig in hip-hop time.

NATE PATRIN

DOWNLOAD: "Change the Beat," "Rhymes Like Dimes," "Fine Print"

Lyrics Born: Wondering what the hell *TRUE* means.



THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

THE SUNSET TREE ○○○○

4AD

Child-abuse recollections prompt California singer-songwriter's bleakest bleats yet

John Darnielle has written lots of first-person songs, but the thirteenth Mountain Goats album is his first venture into naked autobiography. It opens in a motel room stocked with painkillers, as the singer prepares to confront an old demon: his late stepfather. Darnielle's nasal, speed-strummed folk has never sounded so urgent. At the center of this domestic-violence song cycle, complete with blackouts and police interventions, is a teenager who loses himself in pop music and realizes that defiance is a form of survival ("I am going to make it through this year if it kills me"). These surging, wordy confessionals are sometimes redemptive but never maudlin—a scrapbook of unflinchingly precise memories, exposed to the cold light of day.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "This Year," "Dance Music," "You or Your Memory"

MU

**OUT OF BREACH
(MANCHESTER'S REVENGE)
○○○○**

OUTPUT

Wacky married couple make hysterical songs about Paris Hilton, Michael Jackson and eBay thieves

Once, electronic musicians dismissed rock as antiquated. Now, they all wanna be garage bands and pile on the distortion and punk attitude accordingly. Nobody does it better than Mu, the married duo of Japanese-born performance artist Mutsumi Kanamori and American producer Maurice Fulton. What's great about Mu (say "moo") is how their second album retains electronica's futuristic rhythm-science and weird textures while still kicking out the jams: Kanamori's petulant accented-English shrieks perfectly amplify the demented vibe Fulton

storyoftheyear



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New Order:
"Land's End
had a clearance
sale, okay?"

works up using live-sounding drums, seething percussion and just about every form of sound-tweaking effect at his disposal. The title track features hideously processed vocals like strands of fluorescent drool, while "Throwing Up" offers a vivid evocation of puking your guts up after drinking too much. Mu's combination of brutality and finesse can feel pretty eerie. It's as if the music's beating you up, but you can't help admiring how exquisitely angled each punch is.

SIMON REYNOLDS

DOWNLOAD: "We Love Guys Named Luke," "Throwing Up," "Paris Hilton"

NEW ORDER

WAITING FOR THE SIRENS' CALL ★★★

REPRISE

Eighth album from the Manchester dance-rock heroes

Despite their remarkable legacy—1983's "Blue Monday" stayed in the U.K. Top 200 for five years—New Order have always shrugged off the weight of expectation. Their best songs sound like they're hardly trying, while their worst suggest they're not trying at all. *Waiting* their first album without keyboardist Gillian Gilbert) zigzags between immensely beautiful and crushingly ordinary with disorienting regularity. How could the same people be responsible for both the yearning, wondrous "Turn" and the calamitous dance-pop of "Guilt Is a Useless Emotion"? How come nobody told Bernard Sumner that lyrics like "Real love can't be sold/It's another color than gold" needed more work? Yet the old magic remains: When New Order are on form, they're transcendent.

DORIAN LYNESKEY

DOWNLOAD: "Waiting for the Sirens' Call," "Turn"

NITTY

PLAYER'S PARADISE ★★★

UNIVERSAL

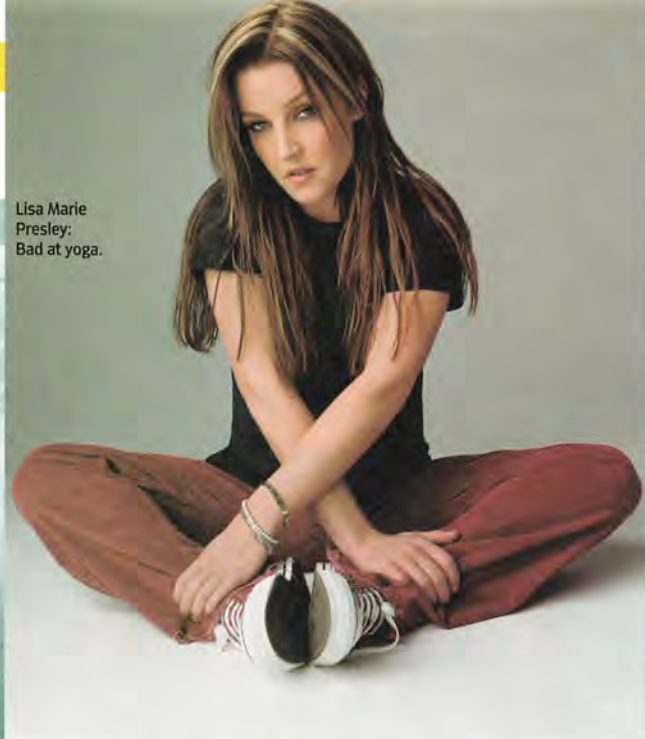
Infectious Bronx party MC is a G—as in G-rated

Calling all wedding DJs, anxious prom chaperones and everyone who thinks hip-hop hasn't been the same since Young MC fell off: Nitty is your favorite new rapper. He's obsessed with booty, but on the crass-o-meter he's tucked somewhere between Fresh Prince and Sir Mix-a-Lot (he actually refers to sex as "the birds

and bees"). Some fancy speed-rapping aside, his flow is a charmingly basic throwback, full of actorly boom, obvious punch lines and cadences cribbed from Run-DMC. The best tracks, frontloaded here, are pure pop: The exuberant "Hey Bitty" taps Toni Basil's claptastic '80s hit "Mickey" (which reappears again on "It's Official"), while lead single "Nasty Girl" borrows its bubblegum hook from the Archies' "Sugar Sugar." The only thing missing is a Tone Loc cameo.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "ABC," "Nasty Girl"



Lisa Marie Presley:
Bad at yoga.

OF MONTREAL

THE SUNLANDIC TWINS

★★★

POLYVINYL

Indie studio wizard creates a neo-psychedelic opus

On his seventh album, songwriter-producer-performer Kevin Barnes embarks on an evocative acid trip with layovers in sunny '60s pop, dense '70s prog and '80s new wave. It sounds like a garage band, augmented by horns and strings, jamming at the most blotto party on the block, but Barnes created nearly every note on the disc himself, with mad-genius focus. When it works, his songs are intoxicating pop nuggets, fueled by killer hooks and peppered with witty, winking lyrics ("We made love like a pair of black wizards ... you fucked the suburbs out of me"). But meandering instrumental interludes and clunky song titles ("Wraith Pinned to the Mist and Other Games") are low on wink, high on wank.

ROSS RAIHALA

DOWNLOAD: "Requiem for O.M.M.2," "The Party's Crashing Us"

112

PLEASURE & PAIN ★★★

DEF SOUL

Atlanta R&B team returns, profess their love for the "back door"

If 112 songs had Cliffs Notes, they'd read like this: Boy eyes girl in club. Damn!—she's fine. She comes home and assumes the position; he gets the peaches and cream. She betrays his love; he's sad and sorry. On their fifth album, these P. Diddy discoveries adhere to this thematic formula, but insistent beats and gospel-style harmonizing help you forget how trite it is. 112 successfully toe the line between agreeably cheesy and

THE CD WE'RE TOTALLY GAY FOR!

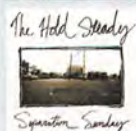
THE HOLD STEADY

SEPARATION SUNDAY

★★★★

FRENCH KISS

That sarcastic dick at every party? He fronts our new favorite band



Craig Finn is the Lenny Bruce of indie rock, profane and profound. His Brooklyn five-

some sounds like the best bar band in the world—with a wry, motor-mouthed fan huskily holler-ing over the racket. Finn wordily expounds on sex, drugs and rock & roll with flooring detail, acuity and feeling, over a bombastic mix of cock rock and Billy Joel. His typical terrain includes Catholicism, déclassé stimulants, former hometowns Minneapolis and Boston, parties gone wrong and, of course, messed-up chicks. Framed as a series of put-downs,

"Your Little Hoodrat Friend" tenderly tells the story of a troubled punk in a bereft city, with organ tendrils and chorus guitar kicks. "Stevie Nix," blithely named for the classic-rock icon and parted by a lavish, rambling piano-ballad break, looks to the suburbs, finding a young woman who "got screwed up by religion" and "screwed by soccer players." For all their heavy shit, it's clear Finn's characters are having a ball.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Your Little Hoodrat Friend," "Stevie Nix"





Out Hud:
"Photo shoots
totally rule!"

agonizingly schmaltzy. Even while crooning their hearts out ("Nowhere") or slinging pickup lines at the club ("Damn!"), they keep their choruses terse, their falsettos fleeting and their moans at a minimum. These bedroom technicians should know: Any climax is sweeter after a bit of restraint.

BAZ DREISINGER

DOWNLOAD: "Nowhere,"
"If I Hit"

OUT HUD

LET US NEVER SPEAK OF IT
AGAIN ★★

KRANKY

On second album, New York groove
merchants party, dis the President

Dance-punk rebels Out Hud don't write songs, they whip up grooves: streamlined throbs and pulses, transmitted live from Saturday night at the coolest club in town. Here, the Brooklyn crew—which includes members of like-minded groups !!! and LCD Soundsystem—offer hip-rolling electro-funk ("It's for You," "One Life to Leave"), icy New Wave ("How Long") and 23rd-century robot disco ("Old Nude"). Cellist Molly Schnick and percussionist

Phyllis Forbes contribute airy vocals that lend a hint of downtown diva flavor, while their lyrics form oblique, ornamental chants. Which isn't to say they're uninterested in

making statements, as one song title proves: "Dear Mr. Bush, There Are Over 100 Words for Shit and Only 1 For Music. Fuck You, Out Hud."

ASTONISHING FACT!

LISA MARIE PRESLEY used to have two pet peacocks at her L.A. home. They flew away and now live in her neighbor's yard.

AMY PHILLIPS

DOWNLOAD: "It's for You," "One Life to Leave," "How Long"

LISA MARIE PRESLEY

NOW WHAT ★★

CAPITOL

Michael Jackson's ex has guts but
fritters them on weepy songs

Elvis's stormy daughter proved she had her daddy's sneer with her unexpectedly OK 2003 debut, *To Whom It May Concern*. But it was the King's voice, not his attitude, that made his reign a lifetime thing, so on the follow-up, Lisa Marie strives to show she's more than a rebel child. The big '80s-style production highlights her breathy-sexy vulnerability, but Presley's better when she rocks, as on the Joan Jett tribute "Idiot," featuring former Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones, and the hidden track "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow," a Ramones cover that shows her grasp of that great band's serious side. And she does a nice job channeling Don Henley's tight-assed anti-tabloid indignation on a cover of his "Dirty Laundry." More often, though, Presley opts for therapeutic tear-jerkers like "Shine," which wastes a chance for her to duke it out with guest vocalist Pink.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "Idiot"

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JOHN TRAVOLTA
ACTOR, PULP
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THE BLACK EYED PEAS
ELEPHUNK
A&M

"I love their almost-Brazilian rap sound. It's my most recent favorite CD."

JOHN PRINE

FAIR AND SQUARE ★★

OH BOY

Happily married old-timer suffers enough to come up with an album

Because John Prine has ranked among our finest songwriters for 35 years, his first album of new material in a decade is a gift. Its two undeniable keepers are up there with his "Hello in There" and "Lake Marie": the weary "Some Humans Ain't Human," a Nashville immigrant's mild, devastating rebuke to the greedheads he rubs shoulders with, and the jolly "She Is My Everything," which makes you wonder why other guys find it so hard to write credible love songs about wives they adore. Most of them do, however—domestic bliss is hell on the confessional muse. And while Prine's fans will admire how smoothly he downshifts from contentment to melancholy and back up again, the unconverted will wish he'd stop relaxing into indifference and Sunday drives down well-traveled roads.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "She Is My Everything," "Some Humans Ain't Human"

A STATIC LULLABY

FASO LATIDO ★★

COLUMBIA

Screamo fivesome is the aural equivalent of Freddy vs. Jason

The minute of creepy soundtrack music that opens ASL's second album primes you for the horror show that follows: A slasher flick without the campy fun. Sex gets punished, the banal becomes ominous and there's lots of screaming. The band burnish their once-ragged, jolting sound with melancholy bridges (the anti-industry screech "Cash Cowbell") and some elaborate, sparkly guitar work (the blandly ardent "Smooth Modulator"). Most songs jump from frenetic verses slapped with layered screams to choruses sung by Joe Brown, whose thin voice sounds almost silly in comparison. Half-ballads like the mid-tempo wail "Shotgun!" sound like a slow death, not an explosive one. And no, lyrics like "everybody's hating me" don't make this a psychological thriller.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: None

SUSIE SUH

SUSIE SUH ★★

EPIC

Young Korean-American songwriter takes a hushed approach to love

On a debut recording almost two decades ago, an English-Nigerian named Sade figured out a way to

Rob Thomas:
"I can't go with
you looking!"



Susie Suh:
"Whatever, Rob.
Not much to
see anyway."



sound warmly familiar yet utterly original. No one has quite repeated that feat—until now, with the debut of this California-born 25-year-old singer-songwriter. On ballads such as "Shell," about breaking out of one, and "Petrified to Be Godlike," a Cure homage shivering with hypnotic regret, Suh's songs about the serious consequences of everyday struggles are based in the blues; she and producer Glen Ballard consolidate and expand the recent vogue for stripped-down, organic sounds into something light-years beyond mere roots. Singing with gravity, athletic power and uncut intimacy, Suh is amazing for the first half of her album, and better throughout the second. A work of reserve and passion, this is a debut in full blaze.

JAMES HUNTER

DOWNLOAD: "Light on My Shoulder," "Seasons Change," "All I Want"

SUPERSYSTEM

ALWAYS NEVER AGAIN ★★

TOUCH & GO

Former punks suddenly discover their hips, make a dance album

They started out in Washington, D.C., as an arty punk band called El Guapo, but under their new name, Supersystem have devoted themselves to the anarchist groove thing:

a politicized, stiff-spined but swivel-hipped version of dance music, with rhythms borrowed from old Afro-Caribbean mix tapes as much as from synthesizer Brits like New Order and Heaven 17. Occasionally, their old fondness for hoarse chants and noise-spasms bleeds into the album's high-speed electrobleeps, handclaps and congas; pay attention to the lyrics, and their suspicion of hands-in-the-air hedonism is clear. "Do you feel a connection to everyone alive?" hiccups Justin Destroyer, and Molly Schnick (of the likeminded N.Y. group Out Hud) chirps back, "Yes and no. Yes and no."

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: "Everybody Sings," "Six Cities"

ROB THOMAS

SOMETHING TO BE ★★

MELISMA/ATLANTIC

matchbox twenty singer turns "hard-core," shows he listens to Lil Jon

Rob Thomas hints at a makeover on his solo debut, trading sculpted arena rock for dance beats and Justin Timberlake hair. "Maybe I should try to find a downtown whore/ That'll make me look hardcore," he muses on the title song. Hardcore Rob—now there's a concept farfetched enough to be fun. With Lil Jon—worthy synthesizer scribbles and chicken-scratch guitars, "Lonely No More" gets him to the doorstep of jiggy-ness. But the momentum collapses with ballads that would suit not only his band ("Ever the Same") but even the Backstreet Boys ("When the Heartache Ends"). Even with Dr. Dre bassist Mike Elizondo and Beyoncé drummer Gerald Heyward putting flexibility in the grooves, Thomas never really gets his freak on.

GREG KOT

DOWNLOAD: "This Is How a Heart Breaks," "Lonely No More"

TRUST COMPANY

TRUE PARALLELS ★

GEFFEN

Hapless mall-metal mercenaries find happiness in forgery

If Linkin Park didn't have a rapper, if Chevelle were more mopey, then maybe Trust Company wouldn't be gunning for a promotion. Three years ago the Alabama quartet's debut narrowly missed the Top 10; this time, Geffen exec Jordan Schur—who recently brought you Ashlee Simpson's singing career—won't allow that to happen. Guitarist James Fukai dashes off chunky, concrete-sledge riffs, and brooding frontman Kevin Palmer bets that radio listeners will mistake his emo-ish smolder for Chester Bennington's. Thanks to producer Howard Benson (P.O.D., Blindside), the band's steroid-muscled single, "Stronger," the lone glimmer, shines like fool's gold. Listen for it soon on an ESPN highlight show.

CARLY CARIOLI

DOWNLOAD: None

TWEET

IT'S ME AGAIN ★★

GOLDMIND/ATLANTIC

Missy's protégée emerges from anguish to discover plain old pain

Shortly before her 2002 debut, Tweet was famously rescued by Missy Elliott from suicidal depression and made the unofficial successor to Aaliyah's edgy R&B crown. On *Southern Hummingbird*, she twittered torch songs about heartbreak and nicotine ("Smoking Cigarettes") and crowded the dance floor with a self-love jam ("Oops (Oh My)"). This album sends her style to rehab, cleaning up messy edges and emotional extremes: Over mid-tempo hip-hop grinds, Tweet discovers that some men are still cold to her ("Iceberg") and admits she occa-

I LOVE THIS CD!



LAUREN GRAHAM
ACTRESS, GILMORE GIRLS, BAD SANTA

U2
THE JOSHUA TREE
ISLAND

"I think if I could be somebody else, it would be Bono. He's so talented but political, philanthropic but sexy. I love U2."

GREG KOT

DOWNLOAD: "This Is How a Heart Breaks," "Lonely No More"

sionally screws up ("Things I Don't Mean"), but she accepts the dysfunction in her wake and raises her romantic standards ("I'm Done"). Good for her. Not so good for her songs, though. Maybe Missy should lower the Zolof dosage.

JAMES HANNAHAM

DOWNLOAD: "Sports, Sex & Food," "Turn Da Lights Off"

UNITED STATE OF ELECTRONICA

U.S.E.★★★★

SONIC BOOM

Death Cab-approved dance-rockers get their giddy on

These Seattle party-starters write songs in the key of !. Cheerful without being cheesy, the seven-piece U.S.E. combine house music's 4/4 euphoria with the exuberance of '70s teen-rampage rock—imagine Daft Punk at a rave with the Ramones. Singer/guitarist Jason Holstrom is full of love—for his town ("Emerald City," a nod to Randy Newman's "I Love L.A.," less the irony), for his radio ("There's Always Music") and even for his crap job (the chirpy rap cut "Night Shift," which recalls Malcolm McLaren's vocal stylings on "Buffalo Gals"). For indie-poppers who have played with the sensitive likes of

Martha Wainwright's contact-lens search proved fruitless.



Death Cab for Cutie, U.S.E.'s penchant for stadium-sized anthems is on a par with *Jock Jams*.

NATE PATRIN

DOWNLOAD: "It Is On!," "Emerald City," "There's Always Music"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

RUN THE ROAD★★★★

VICE

A stellar collection of grime, the hard beats British G's bump in their Minis

From Gilbert Gottfried's voice to Antonio Banderas's Oscar-night serenade, some sounds are so ugly you'd

dive into boiling tar to escape them—but some are so ugly you can't stop listening. Grime is a radical, beguiling kind of ugly, all twitching rhythms, woozy synths and oblong bass slabs that coalesce miraculously into confrontational pop. This comp showcases previously unreleased tracks from most of the genre's luminaries, from effervescent Dizzee Rascal ("Give U More") to oddball Lady Sovereign ("Cha Ching") to Kano, whose "P's and Q's" mines crunk territory. Lyrics navigate rap's time-tested themes of violence, upward mobility and battle-rap arro-

gance, but any sense of competitiveness is dwarfed by the sense of community: Crew lines here are fluid. First and foremost, this is underdog music, us vs. them.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: Kano, "P's and Q's"; Dizzee Rascal, "Give U More"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

RIO BAILE FUNK: FAVELA BOOTY BEATS★★★★

ESSAY

Because Brazilian kids need to shake their tailfeathers too

From onion to *culo* to applebottom, there's no shortage of slang for booty—now we can add *popozuda* to the glossary. This mix of lo-fi dance tracks, from Rio de Janeiro's drug-ravaged outskirts, celebrates an R. Kellian musical principle: There's nothing wrong with a little bump 'n' grind. Perfected in and named for underground dance parties that, like late-'70s hip-hop schoolyard jams, pit creativity and hedonism against violence and poverty, *baile* (pronounced *bye-lay*) funk takes the synthetic oomph of '80s electro and Miami Bass beats and ups the intensity with off-key Portuguese chants, chopped-up horn fanfares, rock riffs and even Luciano Pavarotti samples. No sound is too strange, so long as it's deliriously upbeat.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: Furação 2000, "Mengão 2000 Pt. 1"; De Falla, "Popozuda Rock'n'Roll"; SD Boys, "Planeta Dominado"

MARTHA WAINWRIGHT

MARTHA WAINWRIGHT

★★★★

ZOE/ROUNDER

Rufus's squirmy sister finally makes her debut

It's a dynasty! This daughter of two prominent songwriters can't quite decide if she aspires to the consuming ambitions of her singing brother, Rufus Wainwright. But she's just as acute as he is, as centered on the poetry within the profane, as able to write songs whose meanings stay kept behind doors within doors. And she has a voice—mournful, sweet, full of vinegar—fit for an Irish wake. Her first full album, umpteen years in the making, is musically a bit too singer-song-writery for someone who can range from Irving Berlin to punk. Still, "B.M.F.A." (Bloody Mother Fucking Asshole) is an undeniable calling card, and the rest settles in with a twist. At first the songs sound like little pearls; finally you hear how much itching went into them.

ERIC WEISBARD

DOWNLOAD: "B.M.F.A.," "When the Day Is Short," "Factory"

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST NEW RELEASES FROM THE PAST MONTHS



BECK
GUERO

INTERSCOPE

L.A.'s funkier white boy gets his ass back where it belongs—busting moves on the dance floor.



KAISER CHIEFS
EMPLOYMENT

UNIVERSAL

A dozen new-New Wave songs about girls, riots and wasted Saturday nights by five shamelessly excited Brit lads.



BRIGHT EYES

I'M WIDE AWAKE, IT'S MORNING

SADDLE CREEK

Passionate indie-rock battle cry by a floppy-haired balladeer who breaks hearts with every bat of his lashes.



MARS VOLTA

FRANCES THE MUTE

GSL/STRUMMER/UNIVERSAL

Their ambition as big as their Afros, these stoners make the coolest bilingual prog-rock album of the year.



THE GAME

THE DOCUMENTARY

G-UNIT/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE

Bullet-scarred rapper bids for West Coast supremacy, backed by Dr. Dre and on-again/off-again pal 50 Cent.



M.I.A.

ARULAR

XL

Beloved by hipsters and Jay-Hova, this ultrastylish Sri Lankan MC makes the smart debut smash of '05.

THE

40

MOST
POPULAR
SONGS IN
AMERICA

HOMEYS-TURNED-RIVALS-TURNED-HOMEYS 50 & GAME KEEP TWO DIVAS FROM THE TOP SLOTS.

"LIKE MY
OSCAR IMPER-
SONATION?"

3

MARIAH CAREY

"IT'S LIKE THAT"

THE EMANCIPATION OF MIMI

It takes a heck of an artist to rhyme "party" with "Bacardi" in 2005 and still sound hot. On this Jermaine Dupri-produced single, Mariah—sorry, "Mimi"—hits the club with her girls to dance the drama away. For more of the *Blender* cover girl, check the video by Brett "Rush Hour" Ratner—which her lambs are probably requesting right this minute—or cop her just-released tenth album.

HOW WE DID IT

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay and album sales. Provided by HITSdailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."



POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"CANDY SHOP"	50 CENT	THE MASSACRE SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
2	"HATE IT OR LOVE IT"	THE GAME	THE DOCUMENTARY AFTERMATH/G-UNIT/INTERSCOPE
3	"IT'S LIKE THAT"	MARIAH CAREY	THE EMANCIPATION OF MIMI ISLAND
4	"HOLD YOU DOWN"	JENNIFER LOPEZ	REBIRTH EPIC
5	"LONELY NO MORE"	ROB THOMAS	SOMETHING TO BE MELISMA/ATLANTIC
6	"ORDINARY PEOPLE"	JOHN LEGEND	GET LIFTED SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA
7	"WHY DO YOU LOVE ME"	GARBAGE	BLEED LIKE ME INTERSCOPE
8	"HOLIDAY"	GREEN DAY	AMERICAN IDIOT REPRISE
9	"SITTING, WISHING, WAITING"	JACK JOHNSON	IN BETWEEN DREAMS BRUSHFIRE/UNIVERSAL
10	"LITTLE SISTER"	QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE	LULLABIES TO PARALYZE INTERSCOPE
11	"LIKE TOY SOLDIERS"	EMINEM	ENCORE SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
12	"E-PRO"	BECK	GUERO INTERSCOPE
13	"NUMBER ONE SPOT"	LUDACRIS	THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT DEF JAM SOUTH
14	"DIRTY LAUNDRY"	LISA MARIE PRESLEY	NOW WHAT CAPITOL
15	"MR. BRIGHTSIDE"	THE KILLERS	HOT FUSS ISLAND
16	"LONELY"	AKON	TROUBLE SRC/UNIVERSAL
17	"SINCE U BEEN GONE"	KELLY CLARKSON	BREAKAWAY RCA
18	"AN HONEST MISTAKE"	THE BRAVERY	THE BRAVERY ISLAND
19	"RICH GIRL"	GWEN STEFANI	LOVE, ANGEL, MUSIC, BABY INTERSCOPE
20	"YOU DON'T KNOW ME"	T.I.	URBAN LEGEND GRAND HUSTLE/ATLANTIC
21	"CAUGHT UP"	USHER	CONFESSIONS LAFACE
22	"GASOLINA"	DADDY YANKEE	BARRIO FINO VI/UNIVERSAL LATINO
23	"TRUTH IS"	FANTASIA	FREE YOURSELF J RECORDS
24	"BABY I'M BACK"	BABY BASH	SUPER SAUCEY UNIVERSAL
25	"HAPPY"	MUDVAYNE	LOST AND FOUND EPIC
26	"HOW COULD YOU"	MARIO	TURNING POINT J RECORDS
27	"GIRLFIGHT"	BROOKE VALENTINE	CHAIN LETTER VIRGIN
28	"BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS"	GREEN DAY	AMERICAN IDIOT REPRISE
29	"GOODNIGHT GOODNIGHT"	HOT HOT HEAT	ELEVATOR SIRE
30	"GIRL"	DESTINY'S CHILD	DESTINY FULFILLED COLUMBIA
31	"SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T ..."	U2	HOW TO DISMANTLE AN ATOMIC BOMB INTERSCOPE
32	"OH"	CIARA	GOODIES LAFACE
33	"BEAUTIFUL"	MOBY	HOTEL V2
34	"STATUE"	LOW MILLIONS	EX-GIRLFRIENDS MANHATTAN
35	"LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING"	TIM MCGRAW	LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING CURB
36	"VERMILLION"	SLIPKNOT	VOL. 3: THE SUBLIMINAL VERSES ROADRUNNER
37	"OBSESSION"	FRANKIE J	STORY OF MY LIFE COLUMBIA
38	"ALMOST"	BOWLING FOR SOUP	HANGOVER YOU DON'T DESERVE JIVE
39	"DON'T STOP"	BEANIE SIGEL	THE B. COMING ROC-A-FELLA
40	"I PREDICT A RIOT"	KAISER CHIEFS	EMPLOYMENT UNIVERSAL

5

ROB THOMAS

"LONELY NO MORE"

SOMETHING TO BE

The matchbox twenty frontman tries his hand at crunk—just call him Lil Rob. His solo debut also features a cameo by John Mayer, who may be the only guy that can make Rob Thomas look tough. He'll be in New York this month to play a benefit for VH1's Save the Music, then it's off to San Francisco to kick off a nationwide club tour.



GARBAGE

"WHY DO YOU LOVE ME"

BLEED LIKE ME

Dragging themselves—and the riff from Collective Soul's "Shine"—out of retirement, the bards of broodiness, Shirley Manson & Co., are back with this roaring hit. It's the lead single from their fourth album—and ends a four-year hiatus. Catch them this month through June, as they play gigs in Wisconsin, Chicago and London.



THE BRAVERY

"AN HONEST MISTAKE"

THE BRAVERY

If your roommate starts wearing his girlfriend's eyeliner and dressing like Mike Meyers's Sprockets guy, this New York new wave troupe might be why. The video for their synthtastic single is in heavy rotation on MTV2, and they've landed a coveted slot at Coachella, playing May 1 before touring the U.K.



YOU CAN GO HOME
EARLY WHEN
YOU'RE MARRIED.



GO LONGER.



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The beer with caffeine, ginseng, guarana and a crisp refreshing taste that will unshackle the ball and chain from your evening. So go ahead, linger.

The Eagles, 1974
(left to right): Don Felder,
Randy Meisner, Don
Henley, Glenn Frey and
Bernie Leadon.

MILE-HIGH CLUB

The biggest American rock band of all time went from cowboys to kings

EAGLES EAGLES BOX

☆☆☆

WSM/ELEKTRA

THIS NEW EAGLES box set is a thick tombstone that contains all six of the Eagles' studio albums plus a 1980 live record and a rare Christmas single. Inside, each album is packaged as a CD miniaturization of the original vinyl release, right down to reproducing the stippled-cardboard cover of 1974's *On the Border*. Such meticulousness is less for nostalgia or vanity than to help summon up the Entire Eagles Experience; the evolution of a scruffy bunch of earnest country-rockers into slick, cynical, consummately skilled chroniclers of Los Angeles's great themes: power, money and sex.

Formed in the wake of Gram Parsons's late-'60s groundbreaking fusion of old-time country and basic rock & roll, the Eagles alternated banjo- and dobro-plucking with massed guitar rave-ups, unifying their sound in the astringent harmonies of group leaders Don Henley and Glenn Frey. (Guitarist Bernie Leadon was in Parsons's Flying Burrito Brothers, and bassist Randy Meisner rounded out the founding four.) Henley, a brooding Texan, and Frey, a rowdy Detroit export, had played in Linda Ronstadt's band when she executed her star-making move as an anguished interpreter of material by ecch-E! Lay singer-songwriters like Jackson Browne, who also co-wrote the early Eagles tunes "Take It Easy" and "James Dean," which showed how much these sensitive types loved their early-death martyrs of cool.

The Eagles initially positioned themselves as gunslingers who loped into town to win at the poker table, poke a few wenches and hightail it out for campfire nights under the stars ("the eagle flies alone and he is freeee," they trilled on their self-titled debut in '72). They lived in Hollywood, and postured like bit players on *Deadwood*.

But they were also keen music-biz veterans who wanted hit singles as well as artistic cred, and their first album has three songs ("Witchy Woman," "Take It Easy" and "Peaceful Easy Feeling") that are still integral to rock-radio playlists. Their '73 concept-album follow-up, *Desperado*, told the tale of outlaws grown both savvy and weary, and included one great bit of sod-

den melancholy, "Tequila Sunrise."

In retrospect, the essential Eagles ethos was in place right there: knowing pessimism enlivened by the urge to rock out. Oh, and one other element: misogyny masquerading as condescending concern. *On the Border* is their peppiest example of this, led off by the soaring, see-ya-babe kiss-off "Already Gone," while the gorgeous breakup ballad "The Best of My Love" was the exception that proved the rule: Henley would never sound so sincere and pure again. That album was also marked by a crucial change in producers: Glyn Johns

left, taking with him much of the group's country influence, and Bill Szymczyk saddled up for the long run with a slicker, more stinging sound; *Border* also lists new member/guitarist Don Felder as a "late arrival."

One of These Nights (1975), their first No. 1 album, had hits like "Take It to the Limit" but is easily their weakest work, led by Leadon's awful, endless "Journey of the Sorcerer"—it's no wonder Henley and Frey wrote most of the

band's songs.

Goofy, hard-rocking guitarist Joe Walsh joined the next year, and in 1976 they released *Hotel California*, a grandiose album—it even had a gatefold jacket!—that felt epochal. It sold 16-million-plus copies and gave us "Life in the Fast Lane" as a catchphrase for excess. Pushing aside the string arrangements, money-can't-buy-you-love admonitions and heavy metaphors, this bloated album is simply about savoring the warm smell of colitas, and most of it now sounds as decadent as the band's post-concert parties were reported to be.

The album that holds up best is their 1979 studio finale, *The Long Run*: its title song sinuously funky, its jaundice achieving a pleasurable flow. It can be heard as a work as deeply skeptical about human nature as anything produced by their comrade Randy Newman, their East Coast equivalents in studio smoothness, Steely Dan, or even their enemies in punk rock.

The band was essentially broken up the next year—Frey and Felder were at each other's throats in particular. This didn't stop the core members from launching reunion tours that now feature \$650 VIP tickets. Love 'em or hate 'em for the arrogance they not only described but lived by while dominating 1970s sales charts, the Eagles are tough old buzzards. **KEN TUCKER**

DOWNLOAD "The Long Run," "The Best of My Love," "Tequila Sunrise"

THE SCORE

★★★★★

A CLASSIC

★★★★

GREAT

★★★

GOOD

★★

MEDIOCRE

★

FOUL

THE CURE

SEVENTEEN SECONDS ★★★

FAITH ★★★★★

PORNOGRAPHY ★★★★★

FICTION/ELEKTRA/RHINO

Misery-goat Robert Smith doesn't bother to dance away the gloom on these rewarding early-'80s dourfests

Counterintuitive though it seems, there's a good reason why the Cure's

descent into the emotional abyss coincided with their rise up the U.K. album charts. Where their postpunk contemporaries were frosty and abrasive, the Cure were shamelessly emotional and perversely welcoming, summoning the listener for a cathartic wallow in the bottomless gloom familiar to any misunderstood suburban adolescent. 1980's transitional *Seventeen Seconds* is sparse and subdued, apart from the classic single "A Forest," but *Faith* is a full-scale symphony in gray, almost womblike in its immaculately produced misery. Its doleful ambient tendencies are given full rein on the 28-minute instrumental "Carnage Visors," the pick of the bonus tracks. Closing the unofficial trilogy on a creative high, *Pornography* is a lurid, hellish spew of existential rage that makes you wonder exactly what kind of porn Robert Smith was buying. The tortured lyrics (opening lines come no bleaker than "It doesn't matter if we all die") and nightmarish psychedelia betray Smith's brain-scrambling LSD intake, but despair has rarely sounded so inviting.

DORIAN LYNSEY

DOWNLOAD: "A Forest," "All Cats Are Grey," "A Strange Day"



The Cure:
"Who are you
calling Goths?"

DION

THE ESSENTIAL DION ★★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

How a greasy Bronx rock & roller, beloved by Lou Reed and Bruce Springsteen, later became a sensitive folkie

Setting an example for the Justin Timberlakes of today, Dion DiMucci wasn't content to be a teen idol. Even before Beatlemania erupted, he'd started to outgrow the old-fashioned doo-wop he sang with Dion & the Belmonts. In the name of variety, this 14-track, '60s-spanning set offers few of the early hits, even if the swaggering street cool of "The

Wanderer" and "Runaround Sue" remains his defining legacy. But Dion's subsequent style-hopping is more interesting, from the stomping R&B of "Ruby Baby" to "No One's Waiting for Me," a gloomy ballad Chris Isaak would admire, to "Kickin' Child," a credible knockoff of electric Bob Dylan. Only the weepy requiem for three dead politicians "Abraham, Martin and John," which returned DiMucci to the Top 10 in 1968, qualifies as a dud.

JON YOUNG

DOWNLOAD: "The Wanderer," "Ruby Baby," "This Little Girl"

THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

THIS IS THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND COLLECTION ★★★★★

SHOUT! FACTORY

A horn-fronted *Extreme Makeover* for Louisiana's funky funeral music

The century-old brass-band tradition of New Orleans was starting to show its age when the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, founded in 1977, came along and reinvented it. They kept the sousaphone bass riffs, the razzing trombones and the Mardi Gras

GOLD STANDARD

Rap's first virtuoso MC teams with a breakbeat genius

ERIC B. AND RAKIM

PAID IN FULL ★★★★★

ISLAND

FOLLOW THE LEADER ★★★★★

ISLAND

ALMOST 20 YEARS later, Eric B. & Rakim sound more influential than ever—but also more peculiar. Rakim is one of the greatest rappers of all time, and yet, unlike many of the MCs he influenced, he was a hard-core formalist. Instead of an oversized personality or a series of tall tales, he gave listeners an all-purpose scowl. "I hold the microphone like a grudge," he declared, and it was clear that he wasn't kidding.

When they made their debut in 1987 with *Paid in Full*, Rakim was one of the first rappers to realize that he could rhyme right through the line breaks—poets call it enjambment. He kept the meter even and the delivery smooth, and the 10-song classic, built upon Eric B.'s heavy but nimble breakbeats, offers up one cold-blooded boast after another, none better than the

famous lines from "I Ain't No Joke": "I got a question, it's serious as cancer/Who can keep the average dancer/Hyper as a heart attack, nobody smiling."

Follow the Leader, from 1988, is weirder and bolder, as second albums should be. The virtuosic title track finds Rakim using alliteration as well as any rapper ever has: "Music mixed mellow maintains to make/Melodies for MCs, motivates the breaks." And Rakim's production on "The R" inspired everyone from Jazzy Jeff to Dr. Dre.

For this reissue, each disc is enhanced with a few remixes. *Paid in Full* includes Coldcut's "Mini-Madness" version of "Paid in Full"—but not the epochal "7 Minutes of Madness" remix, one of hip-hop's best-known. *Follow the Leader* has three bonuses, including a long version of "The R." It's a reminder that these lyrical demonstrations also work as club music—despite his claims to the contrary, Rakim could always make a dancer smile.

KELEFA SANNEH

DOWNLOAD: *Paid in Full*: "I Ain't No Joke"; *Follow the Leader*: "Lyrics of Fury"

These days, Eric B. and Rakim's necks really, really hurt.



John Entwistle:
So, he was the
drummer, right?



Dirty Dozen
Brass Band had
difficulty finding
rehearsal space.

parade beat; then they threw in funk, be bop saxophone solos, jovial vocals and sometimes a scrubbing rhythm guitar. Soon enough, what had been grandpa's music became party tunes for a whole new crowd, and a generation of New Orleans brass bands followed through on the Dirty Dozen's ideas. This compilation reaches back to a funeral dirge, forward to funk experts Marvin Gaye and the Meters and sideways to guests like jazz immortal Dizzy Gillespie. All the while, it sounds like no place in the world but New Orleans.

JON PARELES

DOWNLOAD: "My Feet Can't Fail Me Now," "Blackbird Special," "John the Revelator"

BRIAN ENO

MUSIC FOR FILMS ★★★★★

APOLLO ★★★

THURSDAY AFTERNOON ★

MORE MUSIC FOR FILMS ★★

ASTRALWERKS

Barely-there mood pieces from one of rock's greatest producers

The only genre ever invented while lying in a sick bed, ambient music was conceived by Roxy Music/U2 wonk Brian Eno as a beatless, song-free sonic additive to everyday life. *Music for Films* (1976) is 18 short slices of minimalist atmospherics that appear to stop time. Punk anti-

matter, it's the most original and hypnotic of these reissues and a wellspring for the likes of Aphex Twin and Kruder & Dorfmeister. The others reprise similar ideas but provoke less shock-of-the-new. The space shot-inspired *Apollo* (1983) arose from Eno's surprise that astronauts took mostly country music into space, and was designed as "new frontier" music. Actually it's *Music for Films* without the scant abrasive elements, but often awesomely beautiful. *Thursday Afternoon* (1985) is one five-note piano figure extended to an intolerable hour, and *More Music for Films* compiles offcuts from the original recordings. It's moderately groovier but less polished and thus less mind-bending.

ANDREW HARRISON

DOWNLOAD: *Apollo*: "Deep Blue Day," "An Ending (Ascent)"; *Music for Films*: "Aragon," "Two Rapid Formations"

JOHN ENTWISTLE

SO, WHO'S THE BASS PLAYER?: THE OX ANTHOLOGY ★★

SANCTUARY

Stalwart Who bassist, one of rock's great sidemen, commemorated by a solo career overview

For the so-called "quiet one" of the Who, bassist John Entwistle died like a wild man—in 2002, at the Las Vegas Hard Rock Hotel, he suffered cocaine-induced heart failure while in bed with a stripper he'd just picked up at a bar. It brought Entwistle the only headlines of a career spent largely in Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend's shadows. Which is not entirely fair, for he was the most melodic of hard-rock bassists, with a gift for darkly humorous songs. In this two-CD anthology of the parallel solo career he pursued from 1971, there are many flashes of that mordant wit—the comedy jiver "Do the Dangle" is about hanging yourself, and "I Was Just Being Friendly" depicts a



panicked married man caught propositioning a girl he thought was available for hire. Here, too, are live versions of his best-known contributions to the Who, "My Wife" and "Boris the Spider."

PAUL DU NOYER

DOWNLOAD: "Made in Japan," "Thinking It Over"

JERRY GARCIA

GARCIA ★★★★★

GARCIA (COMPLIMENTS) ★★

REFLECTIONS ★★★★★

CATS UNDER THE STARS ★★★★★

RUN FOR THE ROSES ★★

RHINO/J. GARCIA

Captain Trips turns out to be Captain Americana on solo albums



When he wasn't busy traveling the acid-rock spaceways, no counterculture icon knew his way around the diversities of American song as well as the Grateful Dead guitarist, who died 10 years ago. The five solo albums he released between 1972 and 1982, combined in 2004's *All Good Things* box set, have been liberated as individual CDs. The sepia-toned Americana of "Deal" and "To Lay Me Down" nestles on his eponymous solo debut among studio weirdness that has not worn well. Making an about-face, Garcia did respectful justice to personal heroes Chuck Berry and Irving Berlin on a similarly titled covers fest. And while *Reflections*' beautifully rendered, Dead-assisted originals comprise an understated revelation, the glorious gospel-influenced *Cats*

Under the Stars remains Garcia's most vital work. The declining Garcia was unfortunately reduced to dusting off 1974 rejects for his final solo effort, *Run for the Roses*. But hit or miss, each album finds redemption in a lovingly curated assortment of outtakes, jams and live goodies that double its original length.

RICHARD GEHR

DOWNLOAD: "Don't Let Go," "Orpheus," "To Lay Me Down"

GONG

ANGEL'S EGG ★★★★★

YOU ★★

ASTRALWERKS

Fourth and fifth albums of out-there jazz-rock from crazed Eurohippies

Taking their name in 1969, following a "vision" allegedly experienced by Australian singer-guitarist Daevid Allen, Gong were a tripped-out combination of jazz virtuosity and rock propulsion, a vehicle for Allen's half-spoken, half-sung tales of alien pixies and spooky, whispered vocals from his wife, Gilli Smyth. *Angel's Egg*, from 1973, remains their best album, weirdly funky on sax-based "I Never Glid Before" and playfully subversive on ethereal, bong-blasted "Other Side of the Sky" ("Hare, hare, ladies' lavatory," twitters Allen, madly). *You* followed in 1974 with a heavier, less whimsical sound, more reliant on Steve Hillage's screaming jazz-rock guitar and inclined to outstay its welcome. Unless, of course, you're completely out of your gourd.

TONY POWER

DOWNLOAD: *Angel's Egg*: "I Never Glid Before," "Love Is How You Make It," "Sold to the Highest Buddha"; *You*: "Perfect Mystery" →

BRITTANY MURPHY
ACTRESS, *SIN CITY*,
8 MILE, *CLUELESS*

SLICK RICK
THE RULER'S BACK
DEF JAM

"Slick Rick is an incredible rapper. He plays all these different characters, and he mixes live instruments with synthesized beats. Very cool."



The Human League in their school play version of *Pretty in Pink*.

THE HUMAN LEAGUE THE VERY BEST OF THE HUMAN LEAGUE ★★★★★

ASTRALWERKS

Robotic synth-pop Brits had songs as bittersweet as their haircuts were absurd

Beneath the chirpy tunes and Game-Boy basslines that announced them as leaders of a technologically hip New Wave, the Human League were about that most, well, human of qualities: emotion. Artfully balanced between cool-as-plastic presentation and the expression of pure jealousy, lust, joy and regret, they released one perfect LP (1981's *Dare!*) and made a fistful of terrific singles, making their output ideal for a best-of format. The indelible "Don't You Want Me" kicks off this set (neither their first nor, likely, their last greatest-hits collection), but it's the next 10 tracks that make their case as a band of real achievement: Kraftwerk with heart. "(Keep Feeling) Fascination" is sheer, slippery elation set loose in a Moog factory; in "Louise," Phil Oakley's baritone frames a single, emotionally loaded moment between former lovers in a Zen-spate ballad. All pop should be so simple, and so complex.

STEVE BODOW

DOWNLOAD: "Love Action," "(Keep Feeling) Fascination," "Louise"

I LOVE THIS CD!



SETH GREEN
ACTOR, AUSTIN POWERS, FAMILY GUY

PRIMUS PORK SODA
INTERSCOPE

"This is the first Primus album I ever heard, and it was like nothing I'd ever heard. Their music is weird and subversive, and I love the theatrics."

NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN THE ULTIMATE NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN, VOL. 1 ★★★★★

NARADA

Magnificent early recordings by the Eddie Vedder-endorsed master

Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was the Aretha Franklin of qawwali, the Sufi devotional music dedicated to better living through soul-wrenching sounds. Several watered-down 1990s releases on Peter Gabriel's RealWorld label had sealed Nusrat's international rep when diabetes cut short his career just shy of his fiftieth birthday in 1997, but the 140 minutes of straight-ahead Islamic ecstasy on this two-CD set, recorded between 1978 and 1982, are the real deal. Over seven tracks ranging from 13 to 30 minutes in length, Nusrat soars, roars, dips, scats and wails in praise of all things Koranic above a churning matrix of chattering drums, moaning harmoniums, clapping hands and testifying chorus. Nusrat fervently wants you to get off, and he succeeds.

RICHARD GEHR

DOWNLOAD: "Haq Ali Ali Moula Ali," "Saanson Kee Mala"

B.B. KING THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION ★★★★★

GEFFEN/UME

Blues royalty gets served a pauper's compilation

Ultimate? B.B. King's latest best-of is a gimmicky single-disc exploitation, released to commemorate the guitarist-singer's 80th birthday this year. If you know King only as the distinguished old guy heightening diabetes awareness on TV, this little 21-track peek into his vast discography serves as a fairly credible intro to a genuine American music master. "Three O'Clock Blues" and "Rock Me Baby," from the '50s and '60s, help set the impossibly high standard that

THE GUIDE REISSUES



Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's break-dancing routine needed work.



Queen Latifah: Royal scepter not pictured.

blues and rock guitarists have aspired to since. And with "The Thrill Is Gone" in 1969, King made white America sit up and listen. His recording career over the past 30 years, alas, receives shabby treatment here, with little care given to song selection. Better to get acquainted with the kindly great man through his stunning 1967 live-in-Chicago album, *Blues Is King*.

FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

DOWNLOAD: "Three O'Clock Blues," "Rock Me Baby," "The Thrill Is Gone"

LEE PERRY

I AM THE UPSETTER ★★★★★

TROJAN

Eccentric cross-section of even more eccentric reggae producer's '70s work

The first two discs of this deluxe box are a near-perfect overview of Lee "Scratch" Perry's crackpot/genius reggae production from 1968 to 1974: left-field inventiveness (his own "People Funny Boy," a sound effect-augmented attack on a rival producer), fine-tuned production for favorite singers (Bob Marley's breakthrough "Duppy Conqueror") and obsessive variations on favorite rhythms (especially Junior Byles's "Beat Down Babylon"). But the other two discs, focusing on the celebrated 1975-1978 era, when Perry ran amok in his own Black Ark studio, forgo the hits in favor of rarities and dub versions. There's some deep and wild stuff here, especially a selection of

extended, spaced-out "disco-bum" remixes, but also some trivial instrumentals and second-rate recyclings of far better songs from those years.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: Junior Byles, "Curly Locks"; The Twin Roots, "Know Love"

QUEEN LATIFAH THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION ★★★★★

MOTOWN/UNIVERSAL

Host of this year's Grammy Awards proves: Feminism can be fun!

Queen Latifah's career has no dearth of ironies—now a luminous Cover Girl with a Hollywood résumé, she was once a Jersey girl with a mic and a gripe—but this one trumps all: "Latifah" is Arabic for "delicate." When she hit big in '88, Latifah seemed as delicate as a pit bull. Here was a female MC who called attention to her "gluteus maximus" only to tell you to kiss it, who was fresh and funky enough to preach about "U.N.I.T.Y." and "Black on Black Love" without sounding like, well, a preacher. This retrospective, culled from Latifah's four rap albums, showcases her range of skills: She's best at being indignant, but when she's as jazzy and mellow as a lounge singer ("Paper," "Weekend Love"), the Jersey girl proves she always had a little Chicago in her.

BAZ DREISINGER

DOWNLOAD: "Wrath of My Madness," "Rough," "Paper"

BURIED TREASURE UNEARTHING LOST CLASSICS

UGK

TOO HARD TO SWALLOW ★★★★★

BIG TIME/JOE, 1992

Before crunk, Southern rap threatened to be just as literate as its Northern counterpart. From the Houston exurbs, UGK consisted of logorrhea-suffering gangster Bun B and Pimp C, whose funk-and-soul-drenched production suggested



Dr. Dre in a haunted house. This debut features the ultimate dope dealer's lament, "Pocket Full of Stones," and "Feel Like I'm the One Who's Doin' Dope," which samples hometown buddies the Geto Boys, an act of both homage and entitlement. JON CARAMANICA

DOWNLOAD: "Pocket Full of Stones," "Something Good," "Short Texas"



John Mellencamp, shortly after scalping Farrah Fawcett.

GROWING PAINS

Dubbed "The Little Bastard," his attitude was ornery, but his music was initially dull as a nap

JOHN MELLENCAMP

A BIOGRAPHY ★★

JOHN COUGAR ★★

NOTHIN' MATTERS AND WHAT IF IT DID ★★

AMERICAN FOOL ★★★

UH-HUH ★★★★★

MERCURY

JOHN MELLENCAMP SPENT his first few albums feuding with the unwelcome legend of Johnny Cougar. The Indiana-born songwriter didn't ask for the nickname—it was coined by a conniving manager and, according to legend, Mellencamp didn't know he'd become "Cougar" until he saw a finished copy of his 1976 debut.

So right from the beginning, Mellencamp's career was born in frustration, deceit and identity confusion.

And as these reissues make clear, it wasn't until his sixth (!) album, *American Fool*, that a coherent Mellencampian (or is that Cougarian?) signature emerged.

A Biography, his third effort and the first in this series, is a

groaning 1978 buffet of everyman rock clichés sung with an excess of self-importance. The album wasn't released in the U.S., but overseas its stomping plea "I Need a Lover" landed on the radio, and it was included the next year on the mostly dreary *John Cougar*, and became Mellencamp's first Top 40 hit. (Each of these "definitive remasters" gets a sonic upgrade and a bonus track, though only "Take Home Pay," the song appended here, merits special mention.)

The hint of promise at this point has to do with attitude: He sounds like a pissed-off rock star, or at least, a badass teenager taking Rock Star 101. In the 1980 follow-up, *Nothin' Matters and What If It Did*, he tries on some ill-fitting cheap outfits, including jittery New Wave uh-oh's copped from the Cars. But he also gets serious help from one of the great backing bands of the era, an ensemble full of basic backbeats and twitchy fire.

Five years into his career,

American Fool turned him into a star. What changed? Mellencamp cut back on the wildcat experimenting to focus on insistent hooks ("Hurts So Good") and more disciplined narratives—e.g., the chart-topping single "Jack and Diane," still one of rock's most vivid blow-by-blow accounts of romantic flameout.

The streamlining continues on 1983's considerably more consistent *Uh-Huh*, his first album credited to John Cougar Mellencamp. He's fully settled

inside his own sound, expressing middle-class disillusion-

ment in the universal tones of Bruce Springsteen, though in a scrappier way, replacing the Boss's grand metaphoric leaps with plainspoken, dirty-finger-nails odes like "Pink Houses" and the surprisingly uncontrived, fist-shaking "Authority Song," a pitch-perfect anthem that neatly parallels his own struggle to throw the Cougar off his back.

TOM MOON

DOWNLOAD: "Born Reckless," "This Time," "Take Home Pay," "Play Guitar"

UNDER THE INFLUENCES

THE ARTIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS **JOHNNY COUGAR** REFLECTS ON THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPED HIS CAREER.

The first record I ever bought was Chubby Checker's "The Twist."

I had to, man. The dime store in Seymour, Indiana, had a huge twist contest for teens, but I entered when I was 10.

In the '50s and '60s, my dad had bongo parties. I heard a lot of jazz, but what I really remember hearing was Woody Guthrie and Odetta.

My parents always had Hank Williams records. Ever see *The Last Picture Show*? Those were all Hank's songs. That's a great movie—Larry McMurtry wrote it.

I made a movie with Larry McMurtry. It was called *Falling From Grace*, and we based it on his college thesis, the novel *Horseman, Pass By*. I had McMurtry at my house and for three hours one night he told me what inspired him to create this character. I am so fucking lucky.

My cousin Tracy—who died from smoking three years ago—introduced me to cigarettes. He was an idol of mine, four years older than me. Nobody fucked with Tracy. To get me out of his hair, he'd send me all over town to buy Camel filters ... which weren't invented yet. I've been smoking since I was 14. I'm 53—that's a lot of cigarettes.

My dad hated Brando—he called him "Marlon Branflakes" At that age, if my dad didn't like something, I wanted to know why. So I saw *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and to this day it's still my favorite movie and play.

***American Fool* was the first time I actually sat down and spent time trying to write a song. So I went back to where I started: Guthrie, Dylan, Stones. That was the first time I listened to figure out how other musicians arranged their songs.**

My politics were shaped by Vietnam. I was in the March on Washington in

1970. Of course, in true Mellencamp fashion, I smoked too much pot and ended up with some

girl and only marched about a block. STEVE KANDELL



Chubby Checker: Surprisingly svelte.

THE ROLLING STONES SINGLES 1968-1971 ☆☆☆

ABKCO

Some of the greatest rock music ever made, extravagantly presented in a really irritating format

Brian Jones's death. Keith Richards's escalating drug problems. Altamont's Age of Aquarius—ending violence. 1968-1971 was not a happy-happy-joy-joy time for the Rolling Stones. But, singles-wise, it could not have been better, as proven by this box set. The third in a dubious series, it holds individual CD versions of "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Honky Tonk Woman," "Brown Sugar" and all of the band's other 45s from that period, complete with original artwork and b-sides (though "b-sides" hardly does justice to the likes of "Bitch," "Sway" and "You Can't Always Get What You Want"). *Singles* is a beautiful artifact, though its usefulness is debatable given the number of Stones comps in stores, plus the RSI-inducing amount of fiddling needed to play more than two tracks at a time. Meanwhile, the inclusion of "Sympathy for the Devil" remixes by Fatboy Slim and the Neptunes redefines the question, "Who the hell thought remixing 'Sympathy for the Devil' was a good idea?"

CLARK COLLIS

DOWNLOAD: "Honky Tonk Woman," "Sympathy for the Devil," "Memo From Turner"

STEREOLAB OSCILLATIONS FROM THE ANTI-SUN ☆☆☆

TOO PURE

Singles collection from England's lounge-pop heroes

The cool-kid cognoscenti's favorite retro-futuro avant-pop ensemble for over a decade now, Stereolab have been called Marxist and Dadaist, but a more relevant ideology is minimalism—as in the strategic use of repetition and subtle variation. Or maybe cosmopolitanism—as in the inspired revival of discarded styles ranging from cocktail-lounge kitsch to



Mick Jagger: "There's got to be a better way to floss."

polyrhythmic Krautrock. Rounding up the singles and EP tracks that predate the 2002 death of co-guitarist-vocalist Mary Hansen, this three-CD-plus-DVD set disproves the common notion that Stereolab songs all sound the same. Devising endless permutations from their signature elements—pulsing grooves, percolating keyboards and Laetitia Sadier's

French-accented stream-of-consciousness croon—*Oscillations* oscillates from sunny to noodly to funky. Taking in this sprawling survey, you hear a formula being obsessively revised, refined and, at times, even perfected.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "Ping Pong," "Jenny Ondioline," "Miss Modular"

PAPA WEMBA 1977-1997 ☆☆☆☆

STERN'S AFRICA

Congolese music's great surviving big man gets the American best-of he has long deserved



A stickler for terminology, Papa Wemba refuses to call his music *soukous* or *rhumba*, but that'll do for us non-Africans. The 55-year-old is the greatest vocalist ever to work in the Cuban-inflected dance genre that dominated his native continent in Afropop's heyday—as powerful when he's clear as when he's rough, and surpassingly gentle when he croons. He's also a demanding bandleader whose guitarists can billow smoothly in the finest Congo-Parisian manner but early on nailed less delicate effects. With the ingrained mastery of the village chief he might have been, he's turned out gorgeous, muscular, propulsive music for three decades. Only the departed *rhumba* paterfamilias Franco has had his name on a collection as impressive as this 18-track double CD.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "Esclave," "Amina," "Victime de la Mode," "Matebu"

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST REISSUES FROM THE PAST MONTHS



THE COMPLETE MOTOWN SINGLES VOL. 1: 1959-1961

HIP-O SELECT

An exhaustive six-disc set celebrating the meteoric rise of Hitsville, USA. Available only at hip-oselect.com.



OZZY OSBOURNE PRINCE OF DARKNESS

EPIC

An all-embracing box of the Birmingham bat-eater's post-Sabbath work, including re-recorded classics.



NINE INCH NAILS THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

INTERSCOPE

Ten years later, Trent Reznor's brutal freak-electronic opus is back, and not an ounce less terrifying.



ROCKY ERICKSON I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE BEFORE

SHOUT! FACTORY

A devilish two-CD anthology from the Texas father of psychedelic rock.



DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS PIZZA DELIVERANCE

NEW WEST

This adventurous second album finds DBT hitting a stride that made them *Blender*'s favorite southern rockers.



YO LA TENGO PRISONERS OF LOVE

MATADOR

Three discs of the gentle, droning majesty that made Yo La Tengo indie pace-setters for the past 21 years.

I LOVE THIS CD!



TATE DONOVAN
ACTOR, *THE O.C.*,
THE PACIFIER

**THE POSTAL SERVICE
GIVE UP**

SUB POP

"I listen to them while I run—they have this really wonderful rhythm to their music. It is a nice, calming pace for a long run."

REISSUES IN BRIEF BY JON YOUNG



Cameo:
"We're never
gonna regret
these haircuts."

BETTER THAN EZRA GREATEST HITS **CD**

ELEKTRA/RHINO

Better Than Ezra probably fantasized about growing up to be R.E.M.; instead, the New Orleans group plays cheesy pop suitable for bad movie soundtracks. Thanks to the cornball melodies and overheated vocals of Kevin Griffin, "In the Blood," "Desperately Wanting" and other outbursts inspire a quick emotional rush and lingering feelings of shame.

DROPKICK MURPHYS SINGLES VOLUME 2 **CD**

HELLCAT/EPITAPH

The bagpipe player indicates a Celtic influence, but Dropkick Murphys are really just an old-fashioned working-class punk band, and a great one at that. Among the Bostonians' collected odds and ends are covers of AC/DC, Motörhead, Danzig and even Creedence Clearwater Revival, whose "Fortunate Son" becomes a stirring eruption of righteous anger.

EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL

ADAPT OR DIE: TEN YEARS OF REMIXES **CD**

SIRE/ATLANTIC

Having traded retro jazz-pop for dignified electronica back in the '90s, EBTG understands adaptation. Despite the contributions of star remixers Todd Terry ("Wrong") and King Britt ("Rollercoaster"), the dominant presence remains singer Tracey Thorn, sporting a British melancholy that can squelch the perkier groove.

ARETHA FRANKLIN & KING CURTIS

LIVE AT FILLMORE WEST **CD**

RHINO HANDMADE

Capturing every note from a trio of 1971 shows, these four repetitious

discs cry out for editing. Though Franklin is in fine, testifying form, three similar versions of even a classic like "Respect" is overkill. Still, the hypnotic, 26-minute take on "Spirit in the Dark," guest starring Ray Charles, has magical healing powers.

WILLIE HIGHTOWER

WILLIE HIGHTOWER **CD**

HONEST JONS/ASTRALWERKS

Unjustly obscure, Alabama's Willie Hightower cut some remarkable deep-fried soul singles in the '60s and '70s. His passionate rasp, which owes everything to Sam Cooke, evokes breathless ecstasy ("Ooh, Baby, How I Love You") and crushing agony ("You Used Me") with equal fervor. And the cover of Joe South's "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" is a masterpiece.

THE KINKS

COME DANCING: THE BEST OF 1977-1986 **CD**

KOCH

After kicking an addiction to rock operas, Kinks leader Ray Davies did his damndest to think commercial. Although the calculated exuberance of "Sleepwalker" and "Wish I Could Fly Like Superman," presented in a disco mix, no less, seems crass, the airy "Come Dancing" reaffirms his gift for bittersweet British charm.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

OLD SCHOOL SOUL PARTY **CD**

SHOUT! FACTORY

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JOY DIVISION ★ NEW ORDER

How rock's great depressives survived a suicide and became masters of dance music **BY DOUGLAS WOLK**

EVERY
ORIGINAL
CD
REVIEWED

LIKE LOTS OF other British bands, Joy Division started when bassist Peter Hook and guitarist Bernard Sumner saw the Sex Pistols in 1976. They joined forces with "human drum machine" Stephen Morris and trembling-voiced baritone Ian Curtis.

But unlike the first wave of punks, Curtis sang about the imploding emptiness of his psychic landscape and the crush of history; Joy Division named itself, with brutal irony, after Nazi prostitution compounds. There aren't many groups more joyless, or more gravely magnificent.

Curtis was plagued by epileptic seizures, and in May 1980, just before Joy Division's first American tour, he hanged himself, at the age of 23. The remaining three members added Morris's girlfriend Gillian Gilbert on keyboards. The renamed New Order gradually thawed to pleasure and liveliness; they started cranking out singles every few months, assimilated ideas from electronic dance music and eventually became the center of the early-'90s scene in Manchester, partly thanks to their legendary club, the Hacienda. Their messy 1993 breakup was followed by an unexpected reunion five years later, and they've continued to work together (slowly) ever since.



Joy Division, 1979
(left to right):
Stephen Morris,
Ian Curtis,
Bernard Sumner,
Peter Hook.

CLASSIC

NEW ORDER POWER, CORRUPTION AND LIES

QWEST, 1983
★★★★★



Everything abruptly clicked on New Order's second album when they integrated Italian disco-style sequencers into their emotionally

subdued songs and began to have a little fun. They scored a massive, enduring club hit with "Blue Monday," which evolved from a drum-machine test pattern; meanwhile, Sumner took over singing, or rather attempting to sing, full time. ("I fucking hate 'Blue Monday,'" he has said. "It's not really a song.")
Download: "Blue Monday," "Your Silent Face," "Age of Consent"

NEW ORDER SUBSTANCE

QWEST, 1987
★★★★★

NEW ORDER

SUBSTANCE
1987

Twelve brilliant dance singles track New Order's evolution as they turned British postpunk and American dance music into (and on to) each other. The

second disc has a dozen of the killer throwaways and frantic remixes they used for B-sides, including "1963," which became a U.K. hit years later.
Download: "Ceremony," "Everything's Gone Green," "True Faith"

JOY DIVISION SUBSTANCE

QWEST, 1988
★★★★★



Almost all of Joy Division's finest and darkest songs weren't on their two proper albums, and this is a deeper statement than either, bringing together the punk nihilism of their first EP, the brittle dance nihilism of singles like "She's Lost Control" and the bottomless, heartbreakingly resigned nihilism of Curtis's later songs. Not quite a greatest hits (like the avoidable *Permanent*), but an ideal and vivid guide to their bleak vision.

Download: "Love Will Tear Us Apart," "She's Lost Control," "Transmission"

GREAT

JOY DIVISION CLOSER

QWEST, 1980
★★★★★

CLOSER



A
BRILLIANT
GOODBYE

"I'm ashamed of the person I am," Ian Curtis intones, nakedly declaring his own desolation—but his literary, evocative lyrics on Joy Division's

second and final studio album wouldn't sound like a premonition of suicide if he had lived. There's more here than despair: The chirping synthesizers of "Isolation" point toward New Order's future direction, and the band finds its death-disco groove, throbbing and thwacking, flailing their limbs to ward off the echoing chill.

Download: "Isolation," "A Means to an End," "Colony"

NEW ORDER TECHNIQUE

QWEST, 1989
★★★★★



Inspired by the Ecstasy-drenched Ibiza dance scene, it features frantic, layered blip-and-whoop arrangements whose

Technicolor exterior conceals frustration and confusion—in "Fine Time" Sumner puts on a loverman act even as he wards off an underage groupie. It also has some of New Order's most affecting guitar-based songs, and the rhythm section hammers both styles together with the glittering precision of a fireworks show.
Download: "Fine Time," "Run"

JOY DIVISION HEART AND SOUL

RHINO, 1997
★★★★★



For a band that lasted less than four years, Joy Division has a messy discography; this neat 4-CD package compiles nearly everything

they recorded, along with a blood-raw live disc. It clearly tracks the band's evolution from teenage vitriol to mature torment, the liner notes flesh out their story and a lot of the previously unreleased and rare material is devastating.
Download: "Warsaw," "Dead Souls"

GOOD

JOY DIVISION UNKNOWN PLEASURES

QWEST, 1979

★★★★



The band loathed the way their debut turned out—but its icy darkness didn't sound like anything else at the time. You can hear hints of their punk origins

here, especially on "Interzone."

Download: "New Dawn Fades"

NEW ORDER LOW-LIFE

QWEST, 1985

★★★



Their third album opens so strongly, with a tune about a ghostly soldier and a pounding disco workout about Curtis's ghost, that the rest of it pales

in comparison. Lots of juicy beats, though, inspired by the same NYC clubs that spawned Madonna.

Download: "Love Vigilantes," "The Perfect Kiss"

NEW ORDER BROTHERHOOD

QWEST, 1986

★★★★



New Order rock out: Hook wailing on bass, Sumner cheerfully yelping with more gusto than accuracy and strumming guitar like a percussion

instrument, Morris whacking at the decade's loudest snare drum.

Download: "Bizarre Love Triangle"

NEW ORDER THE BEST OF

QWEST, 1995

★★★★



This collection of New Order's shorter, catchier moments includes some fine singles, like the heretical but decent remake "Blue Monday '88."

Too bad the sequencing is incoherent.

Download: "Touched by the Hand of God," "Let's Go"

BE CAREFUL

NEW ORDER MOVEMENT

QWEST, 1981

★★



Unsure how to go on without Curtis, the band attempted to recover from his loss with this chilly, not-too-tuneful raw nerve of an album—Morris has said

it was "really horrible to make." Sumner, Morris and Hook all try singing, and all try to channel their old frontman.

Download: "Dreams Never End"

NEW ORDER REPUBLIC

QWEST, 1993

★★



All of New Order had been concentrating on their other projects—Sumner's Electronic collaboration with Johnny Marr of the Smiths, Hook's lunkheaded

rock band Revenge, Morris and Gilbert's aptly named The Other Two—and their interest in this contract-filler farewell audibly drops off after its clear-eyed look backward, "Regret," and a couple of solid dance numbers.

Download: "Regret"

NEW ORDER GET READY

REPRISE, 2001

★★



After their 1998 reunion, New Order took their time recording a new album—Gillian Gilbert drifted out of the band, and they brought in

guests including Billy Corgan (who also toured with them). They'd lost touch with dance music, so as lush as the production is, their rhythms sound stuck in time, and the songwriting focuses on their rockier side.

Download: "Slow Jam"

FOR FANS ONLY

JOY DIVISION STILL

QWEST, 1981

★



A posthumous exercise in tying up discographical loose ends, including one of their final concerts from 1980 (at which Curtis sings "Ceremony,"

later New Order's first single), a bunch of lesser studio recordings and a drunken live stroll through the Velvet Underground's "Sister Ray." It was a respectable salvage operation for bereaved devotees, but there are much better live Joy Division discs—try the import *Les Baines Douches 18* December 1979.

Download: "Walked in Line"

NEW ORDER BBC RADIO 1 LIVE IN CONCERT

FUEL 2000, 1992

★



Circa-1990 New Order could be an entertaining live act depending on how much they'd had to drink and what drugs the audience had taken, but their

favorite trick was to push a button and wander offstage while the music kept going. That should tell you all you need to know about this half-plastered, half-canned set.

Download: "Temptation"

NEW ORDER RETRO

RHINO, 2002

★



The rare boxed set that makes a great band sound lame. Bizarrely divided into "pop," "fan," "club" and "live" discs, with a sequence that

makes sense only for people who already know the songs, and featuring no big surprises and a lot of irrelevant remixes. Extra demerits for liner notes likely to baffle non-experts, and for putting most of the halfway worthwhile rarities on a limited bonus disc.

Download: "Confusion"

FURTHER LISTENING

ELECTRONIC ELECTRONIC

WARNER BROS., 1991

★★★★

Sumner's first collaboration with the Smiths' Johnny Marr mostly sounds like New Order without bassist Hook. The Pet Shop Boys guest star memorably on "The Patience of a Saint."

VARIOUS ARTISTS COOL AS ICE

LTM, 2003

★★★★

In the mid-'80s, along with New York dance guru Arthur Baker, New Order (as Be Music) produced these brisk, jumpy synth-funk singles for bands like Quando Quango and 52nd Street.

FURTHER VIEWING

NEW ORDER SUBSTANCE

QUEST VIDEO, 1989

★★★★

Early, clever, arty videos, including Jonathan Demme's magnificent in-studio clip for "The Perfect Kiss" and avant-garde painter Robert Longo's insane string of images for "Bizarre Love Triangle."

Ashlee on her knees, begging a nation's forgiveness.



"Could someone, like, plug in my microphone?"

... BUT THE LITTLE GIRLS UNDERSTAND

IN SYNC!

On her first tour, Ashlee Simpson vows to sing live—but can she hack it?

ASHLEE SIMPSON

NORTHROP AUDITORIUM,
MINNEAPOLIS

MARCH 3, 2005 ★★

IT'S 8:45 ON an oddly mild winter night in Minneapolis, and inside a stately neoclassical theater on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Ashlee Simpson is singing.

No, *really*. Simpson has just taken the stage, wearing black pinstriped pants, a sequined overcoat and a T-shirt with punk-style lettering that reads *I WANT TO BE NORMALLY INSANE*, and anyone who doubts that America's most infamous lip-syncer is keeping her vow to eschew backing vocal tracks on her first tour need only cock an ear to her warbling

rendition of "Autobiography," the opening song.

"Nobody's really seen my million subtleties," she cries, in a voice Paula Abdul might gently call "pitchy." Simon Cowell would not be quite so polite.

Not that the near-sellout audience of 4,000-plus is especially attuned to vocal nuance. It's an exceedingly blond crowd of teens, preteens and pre-preteens (and their moms)—perhaps the largest gathering of Lutheran girl-youth ever assembled in one place—and they are true believers. They've already braved a phalanx of frat-boy hecklers bellowing "Ashlee sucks!" through a mega-

phone just outside the theater.

Once inside, they unfurl handpainted banners (*ASHLEE IS MY GOD*). This august university auditorium is host to an enthusiastic throng of *TRL* viewers, and it makes for an odd scene. An inscription on the façade reads, *DEVOTED TO THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH AND THE WELFARE OF THE STATE*.

Nearby, a freckle-faced girl is shrieking into her cell-phone, "Ohmigawd! I think I just saw Ryan Cabrera!"

As Simpson and her heavily moussed five-piece band charge through "Nothing New," "Love Me for Me" and other chipper punk-pop tunes from the 2.7-million-selling

"I'VE LEARNED TO BE THICK-SKINNED."

Autobiography, the kids in the theater's upper tier pogo with such force that the balcony starts to shake. By the time she launches into a "tribute to the '80s," featuring screechy-karaoke versions of the Pretenders' "Brass in Pocket" and Madonna's "Burning Up," the balcony is heaving violently, and terrified security personnel are hanging on for dear life. Girl power is real.

It's not difficult to understand why Simpson inspires such devotion. She's a TV star first and foremost—throughout the performance, images from her MTV show flicker on a screen above the stage—and her guileless, lovable-dork persona puts you right on her side.

Her songs hold an ideal balance of pop catchiness, punky catharsis and emo-style confession; they all sound as if they were written expressly for a Very Special Episode of *One Tree Hill*, and even post-post-teens are suckers for their singalong choruses. And there's no denying Simpson's goofy onstage charm, whether regaling the crowd with nuggets of inspiration ("Guys, you've just got to have self-confidence and go for it!") or hurling herself into duck walks, pirouettes, head-banging flails—virtually every dance move other than the jig she performed on the occasion of her *SNL* meltdown.

Alas, there is the nagging

issue of *The Voice*. Simpson almost gets away with the rockers, thanks largely to keyboardist/backup singer Lucy Walsh (daughter of Eagles guitarist Joe), who doubles the vocal lines. But an ill-advised mid-show "acoustic set" and a caterwauling version of the power ballad "Shadow" find poor Ashlee veering dangerously close to William Hung territory.

In an odd way, though, the sour notes jibe with the evening's pep-talk theme of perseverance. "It's been a hard year for me, guys," Simpson confides at one point. "But I've learned to be thick-skinned."

At show's end, she drags out her hits: "La La," delivered while writhing in a pink boa, and "Pieces of Me," which the band races through at full tilt until the final chorus, when, in time-honored arena-rock fashion, all music drops away but the drummer and lead singer. And what do you know? Ashlee Simpson is singing in tune. JODY ROSEN



Barry Hyde:
Owns guitar, but
can't play it.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Madcap British group, big on *The O.C.*, woo New York with double-time energy

HOW'D YOU LIKE THE SHOW?



"I was scared the balcony would fall down. That was distracting."

HILLARY LUCARELLI, 20
STUDENT, MICHIGAN



"Once my buzz ran off, the concert kind of sucked."

ERIK JENSEN, 21
STUDENT, MINNEAPOLIS



"She sang for real tonight. I'm sure of it. She sang great."

RACHAEL MOORE, 13
STUDENT, SIOUX CITY, IOWA

THE FUTUREHEADS

THE BOWERY BALLROOM, NYC

FEBRUARY 22, 2005 ★★☆☆

THE BOWERY BALLROOM is packed to the sweaty gills with downtown hipsters and assorted blog celebrities. Outside, crashers and hangers-on are turned away from an already full guest list, leading to some unpleasant scums at the entrance. There's a Stroke (Albert Hammond) and a Hobbit (Elijah Wood) up in the club's VIP balcony. And the Futureheads—the latest export in England's Hot, Young, '80s-Inspired Band of the Month Club—take the stage to the pompous, mock-operatic strains of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody."

A mistake? Hardly. Though the Futureheads—who hail from Sunderland in Northern England, dress like dirty-minded schoolboys (skinny ties, ill-fitting suit jackets) and talk through accents thicker than pints of Guinness—rarely waste more than three minutes per song, each one is stuffed with more mad melodic ideas than most bands use on entire albums. Dual guitarists/yelpers Barry

Hyde and Ross Millard construct their miniature tunes with the same slightly skewed devotion that causes people to build models of boats in bottles. Dense and complex, the multi-part harmonies on their opening number alone—the hopeful head rush "Le Garage"—could make Freddie Mercury smile and smooth his pleaded pantsuit in the afterlife.

Yet tonight it's the punk side of the Futureheads that wins out. The standout tracks from last year's self-titled debut—"Meantime" and "A to B" especially—are short, sharp shocks that go from zero to chorus in about 15 seconds flat, and the band barely acknowledge the space between with them so much as a pause. As digital cameras flash and NYU undergrads scream, the band sprints through its hip British influences (Gang of Four, Wire, XTC) with an ADD breathlessness perfect for kids accustomed to getting what they want in the heartbeat it takes to download it.

The Futureheads share a

bloodline with Franz Ferdinand, but onstage they are both more ambitious and less precious than their stylish northern neighbors. Hyde in particular seems fully focused, introducing songs with a minimum of banter—"This is a song about being lazy," "This is a song about murder"—but a maximum of cheeky, charming confidence.

Besides, his "Decent Days and Nights"—the effervescent single and an *O.C.* staple—more than speaks for itself: Wrestling with urban life, random hookups and youthful frustration, it's like an entire Kinks album in just two and a half minutes.

The night's highpoint—and biggest applause generator—is the band's bizarrely brilliant cover of Kate Bush's spooky '80s ballad "Hounds of Love." In the hands of the Futureheads, what was once arch and maudlin is transformed into something irresistibly joyous and boyish. After a boisterous two-song encore, the audience files out, happy and humming. Somewhere, Freddie Mercury mutters, "Magnifico!" ANDY GREENWALD

URBAN LIFE AND RANDOM HOOKUPS

"Join us in the sauna, your honor?"

THE GOOD!

TWO THUMBS UP!

Douglas Adams's legendary novel is now the summer's most bizarre blockbuster. BY CLARK COLLIS

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

DIRECTED BY Garth Jennings

STARRING Martin Freeman, Mos Def, Sam Rockwell, Zooey Deschanel

WHY DID COMIC sci-fi novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* languish in Hollywood's development hell for two decades? Well, the book starts with the world being blown up by poetry-writing monsters to make way for a new hyper-space highway, while its nominal "hero," Arthur Dent, is an easily confused, bathrobe-clad Brit who complains a lot as he is reluctantly forced to hitchhike his way around the universe. Dent's two principal companions, meanwhile, are a towel-obsessed alien travel writer, Ford Prefect, and a psychotically depressed robot

"IT WAS BALLSY AND ANARCHIC."

named Marvin (who subsequently inspired the Radiohead song "Paranoid Android"). In comparison, pitching a sequel to *Gigli* would be a cinch.

In fact, the late Douglas Adams's 1979 cult novel is so idiosyncratic that many of its devoted fans hoped it would never be made into a movie. Ironically, among their number was the man who has just done so—video director turned first-time filmmaker Garth Jennings.

"When they first said they were going to send the script to me and my producer, we actually said no," Jennings recalls over the phone from his home in North London. "Because we assumed they'd have ruined it. But my agent did what I pay him to do—which is to ignore absolutely everything I say—and sent it over.

And it was ballsy and anarchic and funny and exactly as enchanting as I remember it as a kid."

Jennings did manage to outrage many diehard fans by casting the black and American Mos Def as the originally white and, if alien, at least English-sounding Ford Prefect.

"That seemed to drive people insane," recalls the 32-year-old director. "According to some people, we've done the most abominable thing known to man. But Mos Def's great. He had all the characteristics for someone I want to see hitchhiking across the universe with a towel."

Other cast members include Martin Freeman (of BBC TV's beloved *The Office*) as Arthur, Sam Rockwell as two-headed playboy Zaphod Beeblebrox and, as reli-

gious cult leader Humma Kavula, the prickly John Malkovich.

"I kept thinking, when's he going to do something crazy?" says Jennings of Malkovich. "When's he going to lurch across the table and say, 'You don't know what you're doing, son,' and throttle me? But he couldn't have been nicer."

Should the movie become a hit, there is no shortage of sequel material, given that Adams wrote five *Hitchhiker* novels in all—subsequent titles include *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* and *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish*—but Jennings's film just covers the first.

"Hopefully they'll do the rest," says the director. "*So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* is definitely a title I'd like to see on a movie marquee."





THE BAD!

MINDHUNTERS

DIRECTED BY Renny Harlin

STARRING Christian Slater, Val Kilmer, LL Cool J

The release of *Mindhunters* has been delayed so long that when *Blender* first saw it, it was called a "talkie" and we rode home from the nickelodeon on a trolley. In fact, this is the record-breaking *third* time the film has been our "Bad" choice. But if any movie deserves that ignoble distinction, it's Renny Harlin's serial-killer fiasco, in which Christian Slater heads up (sigh) a team of FBI trainees on a practice mission that goes horribly/boringly wrong. While you are supposed to be amazed by the film's twists and turns, the only real surprise is the fact that it manages to be even worse than Harlin's recent *Exorcist* prequel. And that it's coming out at all.



& THE INDIE!

LAYER CAKE

DIRECTED BY Matthew Vaughn

STARRING Daniel Craig, Colm Meany, Michael Gambon

Can London drug dealer Daniel Craig peaceably dispose of a million Ecstasy pills in the week before he is due to retire? Um ... no! But if this debut movie from *Snatch* producer Matthew Vaughn is not the most surprising or original gangster movie of recent times, it is one of the most entertaining, as Craig's well-ordered life devolves into a blood-drenched nightmare thanks to the machinations of rival thugs Kenneth Cranham and Michael Gambon. Manna for anyone lamenting the Kabbalah-fication of Guy Ritchie.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best movies of the past months



SIN CITY

Superior, star-heavy comic book adaptation.



OLDBOY

Superior, hammer-heavy Korean revenge drama.

AND THE REST...



STAR WARS: EPISODE III—REVENGE OF THE SITH

DIRECTED BY George Lucas

STARRING Ewan McGregor, Hayden Christensen, Natalie Portman

THE PITCH: Lucas finally reveals how golden-locked Christensen becomes the asthmatic Darth Vader. At least, he'd better.

THE VERDICT: Reportedly much darker than the first two prequels, *ROTS* is also the last time you'll ever have to see Jar Jar Binks.



KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

DIRECTED BY Ridley Scott

STARRING Orlando Bloom, Liam Neeson, Jeremy Irons

THE PITCH: Jerusalem blacksmith Orlando Bloom attempts to repel foreign invaders during the 12th-century Crusades.

THE VERDICT: Rumors that Bloom had to wear a chest wig aside, director Scott was previously responsible for the not dissimilar sword-and-sandals-o-rama *Gladiator*.



MONSTER-IN-LAW

DIRECTED BY Robert Luketic

STARRING Jennifer Lopez, Jane Fonda, Michael Vartan

THE PITCH: Unlucky-in-love Lopez thinks Vartan could be the perfect husband, until his mom turns out to be a ... *MONSTER-IN-LAW!*

THE VERDICT: J. Lo has no shortage of experience as a fiancée while, as the titular monsterly matriarch, Fonda makes a welcome return after a 15-year hiatus.



XXX: STATE OF THE UNION

DIRECTED BY Lee Tamahori

STARRING Ice Cube, Samuel L. Jackson, Willem Dafoe, Xzibit

THE PITCH: Tupac-quoting special operative Ice Cube must thwart a Washington coup d'état—and out-act original star Vin Diesel.

THE VERDICT: With Cube and Jackson slickly trading barbs as well as gunfire, it looks as though Diesel could soon be regretting his decision to jump ship.



PALINDROMES

DIRECTED BY Todd Solondz

STARRING Ellen Barkin, Richard Masur, Jennifer Jason Leigh

THE PITCH: After being forced by her parents to have an abortion, 13-year-old Aviva embarks on a strange road trip.

THE VERDICT: Actually, "strange" doesn't begin to describe it, particularly as the heroine is played by eight different people, including a boy and Jennifer Jason Leigh.



A LOT LIKE LOVE

DIRECTED BY Nigel Cole

STARRING Ashton Kutcher, Amanda Peet

THE PITCH: Seven years after meeting on a plane, Kutcher and Peet are still vacillating between being just good friends and—cue string section!—something more.

THE VERDICT: Sounds like a Generation Punk'd *When Harry Met Sally*. Unless that's a cultural void you think needs filling, it also sounds like something to avoid.

DON'T MISS

DON'T RUSH

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?



BRUCE DICKINSON IRON MAIDEN SINGER

"*Finding Nemo*. I loved the bit with the sharks in rehab. It's a kid's movie but it had great adult themes."



THE YES MEN

HBO's hit buddy series proves you don't have to be a star to enjoy the high life—you just need to know one. BY CLARK COLLIS

ENTOURAGE: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

HBO VIDEO

★★★★★

GIVEN THAT NARCISSISM in Hollywood is not so much rampant as a legal requirement, it is hardly shocking that one of Tinseltown's favored, and most proficient, talents is self-portraiture. While the movie industry's interest in Westerns, documentaries and midget gangster movies may wax and wane, its interest in itself has remained a constant, resulting in such classic films as *Sunset*

Boulevard, *The Player* and, most recently, *Adaptation*. It is in such exalted company that HBO's sitcom *Entourage* holds its own.

The creation of comedian-turned-screenwriter Doug Ellin and onetime *It Boy* Mark Wahlberg, *Entourage* hinges around Adrian Grenier's freshly minted, L.A.-dwelling movie star—imagine Skeet Ulrich back when he was going to be the next big thing—and his best friend/conscience Kevin Connolly, as they deal with Hollywood's trials and temptations. But this pair are really just

straight men for Connolly's fellow hangers-on—the slimy, sex-mad Jerry Ferrara, and Kevin “Not Matt” Dillon, in the role he was literally born to play, as Grenier's C-list actor half-brother, Johnny Drama. Desperate for a comeback, Drama is a deliciously pathetic character who, as Ferrara's character scoffs, would “take it in the ass for a guest spot on *The Hughleys*.” Meanwhile, the script's deft zeitgeist-capturing is backed up by cameos from such playing-themselves stars as Gary Busey, Jessica Alba and, naturally, Wahlberg himself.

But there is no doubt that the main reason to buy this DVD set

is Jeremy Piven's turn as Grenier's agent, Ari “Call me Helen Keller because I'm a fucking miracle worker” Jacobs. Previously a nicely acidic but underused talent on assorted films and TV shows, Piven here is awesomely demonic as a man who would probably let his own mom take it up the ass if it would further his career. Any similarity between Ari Jacobs and Mark Wahlberg's own agent, the legendarily combative Ari Emanuel, is by all accounts very much *not* coincidental. Hooray for Hollywood!

**PIVEN IS AWESOMELY
DEMONIC.**

THE GUIDE DVDs

BIRTH

NEW LINE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★

Ultra-rich Manhattanite Nicole Kidman is understandably alarmed when a small boy announces that he is actually her long-dead husband. If the hook is intriguing, it is also the only thing *Birth* has going for it. Director Jonathan Glazer's icy tone tries but fails to resurrect the spirit of Stanley Kubrick, while the increasingly unreliable Kidman plays entire scenes as if she is in a completely different, and even worse, movie.

SEED OF CHUCKY

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★

“This is nuts!” exclaims devil doll Chucky at some lunatic plot development in this latest addition to the *Child's Play* franchise. “And I have a very high tolerance for nuts!” Indeed, a substantial amount of tolerance towards writer-director Don Mancini's wilder flights of fancy is pretty much a prerequisite to enjoy what is less a horror movie than a freakishly black family comedy. But you can't help admire a film that finds Jennifer Tilly gamely playing herself as a porky has-been and boasts the line “They're executing Martha Stewart this morning.”

THE AVIATOR

MIRAMAX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★★

Martin Scorsese's biopic of plane-mad, cleavage-obsessed gazillionaire nutjob Howard Hughes is filmmaking at its most epic. The flying scenes are simply breathtaking—particularly given Scorsese's abhorrence for non-narcotic highs—while Leonardo Di Caprio presents the most sympathetic portrayal

possible of a man given to collecting his own urine. Kate Beckinsale, Jude Law and Oscar-winner Cate Blanchett are just some of the other stars involved, although it is Alec Baldwin who, once again, steals so many scenes someone should call the cops.

THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU

TOUCHSTONE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★★

Oceanographer Steve Zissou is a vain, philandering, stoner blowhard—the perfect role, in fact, for Bill Murray, who acquits himself brilliantly in this latest film from *Rushmore*/The Royal Tenenbaums director Wes Anderson. Equally adept support is provided by Anjelica Huston, Willem Dafoe and Owen Wilson, the latter playing a pilot who may or may not be Murray's son but who agrees to help him seek homicidal revenge on the shark that killed his best friend. Although as funny and visually gorgeous as Anderson's previous films, the end product lacks their dramatic punch, suggesting that Wilson, who usually co-writes with the director but was too busy with *I Spy* to help out this time, may be even more valuable behind the camera than he is in front.



“Need more glue.
MORE GLUE!”

Pictured:
A plastic
sociopath.
And Chucky.





"Since Jen left me, I've had plenty of time to work on my dioramas."

OCEAN'S TWELVE

WARNER HOME VIDEO

★★★★

A.k.a. *Brad and George's European Vacation*. This sequel finds the gang from the first film relocating across the Atlantic in search of more heist-victims, after casino owner Andy Garcia, whom they ripped off in *Ocean's 11*, discovers their respective whereabouts. Also joining the fun is Vincent Cassel's master thief, Catherine Zeta-Jones's Euro-cop and Bruce Willis's Bruce Willis, although with such a vast and agreeable cast, the actual fun is at times stretched wafer-thin.

PRIMER

WARNER HOME VIDEO

★★★★

One of the oddest films released last year, *Primer* is also, for its first half hour, one of the dullest, as a pair of white-collar drones endlessly discuss the progress of some high-tech thingamabob they're working on. But then first-time writer-director-star-producer-editor-hyphen

aficionado Shane Carruth unleashes a surprise that jackknifes the movie into totally unforeseen realms of suburban horror. It simply wouldn't be kind to say more, but your patience and mind will be rewarded and boggled, respectively.

ALEXANDER

WARNER HOME VIDEO

★

Forget the ridiculous gay controversy and enjoy *Alexander* for what it is: the most entertainingly bad movie since *Showgirls*. Where to begin? Wallow in schadenfreude as you watch once-ballsy director Oliver Stone shuffle meekly in the wake of *Gladiator* and *Troy*. Then ponder how the theoretically talented cast of this historical biopic—Colin Farrell, Angelina Jolie, Val Kilmer—could produce such a head-scratching collection of accents. By the time the battle scene with the war elephants degenerates into a psychedelic *Doors* outtake, you'll know you're in the land of the damned—but you can't stop watching. *ERIC ALT*

BLENDER APPROVED

The best DVDs of the past months



DONNIE DARKO: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Slightly less bewildering version of the apocalyptic cult classic.



TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE

PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO

The patriots behind *South Park* mock U.S. foreign policy ... with puppets.

MUSIC DUDs

Britney looks like hell.



AC/DC FAMILY JEWELS

EPIC

★★★★

Whether dressing as a pigtailed schoolgirl or playing the bagpipes on the back of a flatbed truck rolling through Melbourne, Bon Scott was never one to be upstaged by his school-uniform-sporting guitarist. With his wolfish grin, remedial haircut and barroom bawdiness, Scott provides all the highlights in this 40-song, three-decade greatest-hits video anthology. After Scott's death in 1980, AC/DC—now fronted by the equally gravel-voiced but less mischievous Brian Johnson—would be far more commercially successful. But never as fascinating to watch. *ADAM HIGGINBOTHAM*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

RETURN TO SIN CITY: A TRIBUTE TO GRAM PARSONS

IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT

★★★

This 2004 concert finds the cream of country-rockers honoring the man to whom they owe their very livelihoods. And while Steve Earle and Dwight Yoakam do justice to the late Parsons's spirit, it is his old drug buddy Keith Richards who stands out with a version of "Hickory Wind" that is as heartfelt as it is often utterly tuneless. *CLARK COLLIS*

NIRVANA NEVERMIND: CLASSIC ALBUM

EAGLE VISION

★★★★

"We wanted it to be like children's songs," Dave Grohl says of *Nevermind* in this thorough, reverent and punchy documentary. Indeed, the musicians, journalists, producers and label honchos interviewed here help prove what Kurt Cobain feared all along: Nirvana's breakthrough album was, at heart, a beautiful—if barbed—chunk of pop. *JONAH WEINER*

THE RAMONES END OF THE CENTURY: THE STORY OF THE RAMONES

RHINO HOME VIDEO

★★★★★

The kings of the two-minute punk anthem were revealed in heartbreaking clarity in last year's feature documentary. Covering everything from Johnny stealing Joey's girlfriend to Dee Dee's ill-fated rap career, interviews and rare live footage portray a band who hated one another but played together for over 20 years in the vain hope of parlaying their considerable street cred into hard cash. *LAUREN HARRIS*

PUBLIC ENEMY

IT TAKES A NATION: THE FIRST LONDON INVASION, 1987

MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

★★★★

Hard to believe, but 18 years ago, Brigitte Nielsen was a working actress and PE was a vital, firebrand rap group unlike any before or since. This live show, interspersed with backstage shenanigans, was culled from their maiden European tour and finds Chuck D., Flavor Flav and their S1W militia/background singers in incendiary form. Bonus: On the commentary track, Chuck reveals the origin of Flav's clock! *STEVE KANDELL*

IGGY POP LIVE SAN FRAN, 1981

MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

★★

While there is perverse joy—not to mention historical value—in seeing Iggy Pop writhe around in a garter and missing at least one important front tooth, this no-frills live video is essentially a crude bootleg. The set picks up steam during frenetic versions of "1969" and "TV Eye," but the unmixed sound and bar mitzvah-caliber camerawork may be hard for anyone but the most diehard Iggy fan to swallow. *STEVE KANDELL*

Scott Walker:
Beck's sartorial
forebear.



CRITICAL SASS

Learn to communicate with the holier-than-thou music geek in your life. BY JODY ROSEN

THE ROCK SNOB'S DICTIONARY

By David Kamp and Steven Daly

★★★★★ BROADWAY BOOKS, \$13

FOR SEVERAL YEARS now, the highlight of *Vanity Fair's* annual music issue has been David Kamp and Steven Daly's "Rock Snob's Dictionary," a cheeky yet practical nerd-to-English glossary for non-initiates (i.e., people who have lives) to "Drake, Nick," "vocoder," "Soft Machine, The" and other terms bandied about by that deranged sub-species of pop geek for whom, as Kamp and Daly put it, "the actual enjoyment of music is but a side dish for the accumulation of arcane knowledge."

Now expanded to book length, the *Dictionary* at first glance appears to be a *Hipster Handbook*-style novelty item,

but beneath the jokey definitions—a Marshall stack is a "monstrous amplification system designed to ... make up for musicians' penile shortcomings"—lurks a useful historical crib sheet and witty work of cultural criticism that skewers sacred cows (Lester Bangs, Scott Walker) and other hoary rock-crit pretensions. (Particularly welcome is Kamp and

Daly's ridiculing of music-press clichés such as "rewards repeated listens," "sundrenched harmonies" and "coruscating.")

Indeed, the *Dictionary* is nothing if not critic-proof; anyone who'd dare complain, for instance, about the omission of cellist/disco demigod Arthur Russell or longbeard avant-jazz composer Moondog would instantly reveal himself as a Rock Snob of the first order. Better just to say: Rewards repeated readings.



THE GUIDE BOOKS

LIKE A ROLLING STONE: BOB DYLAN AT THE CROSSROADS

By Greil Marcus

★★★★★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS, \$24

Ask not whether "Like a Rolling Stone" is the greatest song ever, but whether you can write a book about a single song in the first place. You can, if

you're Greil Marcus and have been practicing for this moment all your life.

Inevitably not as expansive as his *Lipstick Traces* nor as

bottomless as *Invisible Republic*, it's nonetheless the work of a great historian-stylist relentlessly scouring the territories of American pop's dream life for raptures and nightmares, and bringing it all back home—to find home utterly changed. RENE VIENET



THE WU-TANG MANUAL

By The RZA

★★★★ RIVERHEAD FREESTYLE, \$16

With nine original members, 80 aliases and a fantastically tangled mythology, hip-hop's Wu-Tang Clan can be a tough crew to keep track of. This 250-page compendium, compiled by Clan

founder and chief executive The RZA, is

a sort of Wu-Tang for *Dummies*—in addition to annotated lyrics and a "Wu-Slang Lexicon,"

there's also a primer on Islamic numerology, lengthy chapters on Marvel comics and kung-fu flicks, a discursive discussion of early-'90s sampling technology, even chess tips. In short, it's everything you ever wanted to know about them and more. Much, much more. JOSH EELLS



EVERYBODY DANCE: CHIC AND THE POLITICS OF DISCO

By Daryl Easlea

★★★★★ HELTER SKELTER PUBLISHING, \$20

The baseline that launched hip-hop—from Chic's "Good Times"—came from the pairing of an ex-Black Panther (Bernard Edwards) and a

buttoned-down R&B man (Nile Rodgers).

But after two years of chart domination, America decreed that "disco sucks," and the duo had to record other people's songs. Easlea

manages not just a band bio but also an argument for disco's credibility—proving Chic to be, as John Taylor of Duran Duran put it, "the last great human dance machine before the computers took over." ROB KELLEY



LED ZEPPELIN IV

By Erik Davis

★★★★★ CONTINUUM BOOKS, \$10

While the books in Continuum's long-running "33 1/3" series generally cast classic albums in a personal, anecdotal light, this volume deconstructs cock-rock's most inscrutable mag-

num opus as a collision of music and magic.

Though Jimmy Page's Aleister Crowley fixation has been well-documented, Davis makes the case

that every aspect of the record, from the lyrics to the packaging, is rooted in Satanic mysticism. A helpful reminder to haters who dismiss the record as *Dungeons and Dragons* pabulum that worshipping the devil is pretty cool. STEVE KANDELL



BLENDER APPROVED

The best books of the past months



CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP

By Jeff Chang
ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, \$28

Exhaustively researched and consistently insightful, this is the definitive social history of hip-hop.



VANILLA POP: SWEET SOUNDS FROM FRANKIE AVALON TO ABBA

By Joseph Lanza
CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS, \$15

Behind the (white) music.

Elvis Costello:
Your IT guy's
sartorial
forebear.



THE BEST PART OF A BIG BOOK!

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Excerpted from *Complicated Shadows: The Life and Music of Elvis Costello*, by Graeme Thomson. ©2005 Canongate, \$24



GUEST LIST

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BY JONAH WEINER AND GABE SORIA

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

ROCKSTAR, PS2, XBOX

★★★

UNTIL XZIBIT AND his MTV camera crew break down your front door with a pair of chrome spinners in one hand and a dashboard-mounting DVD player in the other, that 1992 Sentra hatchback languishing in the driveway probably isn't going to gain much in pimpitude. With that predicament in mind, Rockstar—the evil genius behind the hit *Grand Theft Auto* franchise—has steeped this racing game 24 inches deep in the chrome-plated, decadent and fascinating world of luxury auto customization. If you've ever wondered what it might feel like to hit 150 mph in a retrofitted Escalade with a gold grill the size of Rhode Island, wonder no more.

Where the past two *Midnight Club* titles tapped the illegal

underground street racing culture celebrated in *The Fast and the Furious*, the new installment sprinkles a little playa dust on the genre, featuring contemporary luxury cars (Snoop Dogg should be happy to know the Chrysler 300C is present and accounted for) and classic rides (trick out a Chevy Impala with hydraulics and hop up and down to taunt competitors). In an especially entertaining gameplay mode called Aggro, you're

encouraged to hurtle into oncoming traffic, totaling sedans

and school buses alike. (Lest you think this sounds a little too close to *GTA*, it should be noted that no children explode in torrents of blood here.) In Story mode, you cruise around moonlit urban settings in search of rivals to race. As you save up cash from each victory, you amass a fleet of bling-heavy vehicles that makes the Cash Money parking lot look like your uncle's carport. Hours of mindless fun, even if you've had your license revoked.

HOP UP AND DOWN TO TAUNT COMPETITORS.

THE GUIDE GAMES

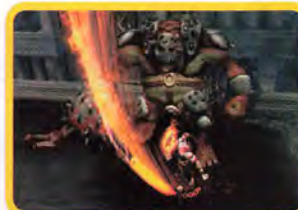


SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

UBISOFT, PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE, PC

★★★★

As long as there's at least one heavily armed rogue nation in the world, there'll be an audience for another Tom Clancy-approved covert-action simulator. Not much sets *Chaos Theory* apart from the pack, but it pains our bleeding heart to admit the formula works. Crawling in the dark through exotic locations and snapping the necks of extremist operatives seems like the coolest job we'll never get.



GOD OF WAR

SONY, PS2

★★★★★

In the videogame universe's never-ending "Who's got the biggest brass balls?" competition, *God of War's* anti-hero protagonist Kratos has to be a top seed: First on his to-do list is nothing short of murdering a deity. Questing through an ancient Greece overpopulated with beasts, the violent, vivid reimagining of Thomas Bulfinch's classic mythology texts make for a thrilling mix—think *Clash of the Titans* starring Charles Bronson.



ADVENT RISING

MAJESCO, XBOX, PC

★★★★

Ambitious in scope (this is the first in a planned trilogy of games) and impeccable in pedigree (its story was written by venerable sci-fi novelist Orson Scott Card), this solid but fairly standard adventure falls short of being the *Star Wars*-killer it desperately aspires to be. The tale of marauding alien races and messiah-like saviors is engrossing enough, but naggingly feels like a sneak preview of something far better yet to come.



FIFA STREET

EA SPORTS BIG, PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE

★★★★★

Dusty Rio de Janeiro favelas and graffiti-bombed Marseilles embankments replace arc-lit stadiums in EA's inspired transposing of its "Street" series to the soccer pitch. The emphasis here is on footwork, speed and brutal action rather than penalties and superstars. And the soundtrack—pumping samba remixes and international hip-hop—could only feel more authentic if it were blasting from a taped-up boombox on the sidelines.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best games of the past months



WARIO WARE: TOUCHED!

NINTENDO, NINTENDO DS

Picking noses and swatting flies are two of more than 100 duties to perform in this entertaining nonsense.



RESIDENT EVIL 4

CAPCOM, GAMECUBE

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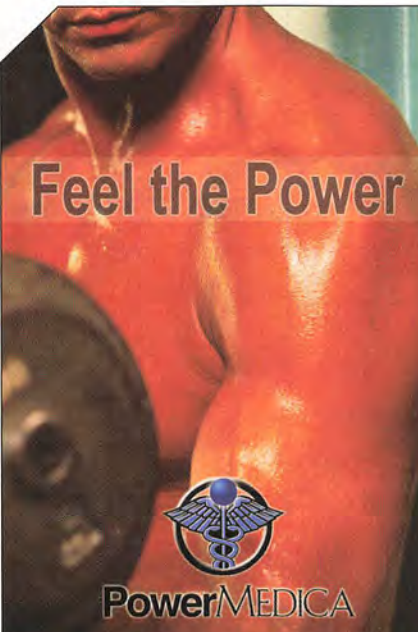
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The bad news is, the Playstation PSP—a palm-sized videogame, movie and music player—is selling out everywhere. The good news is, you can win one by sending us a correctly finished puzzle!



PENCIL ME IN

Hey, it's *Blender*'s crossword! Starring 11 across!

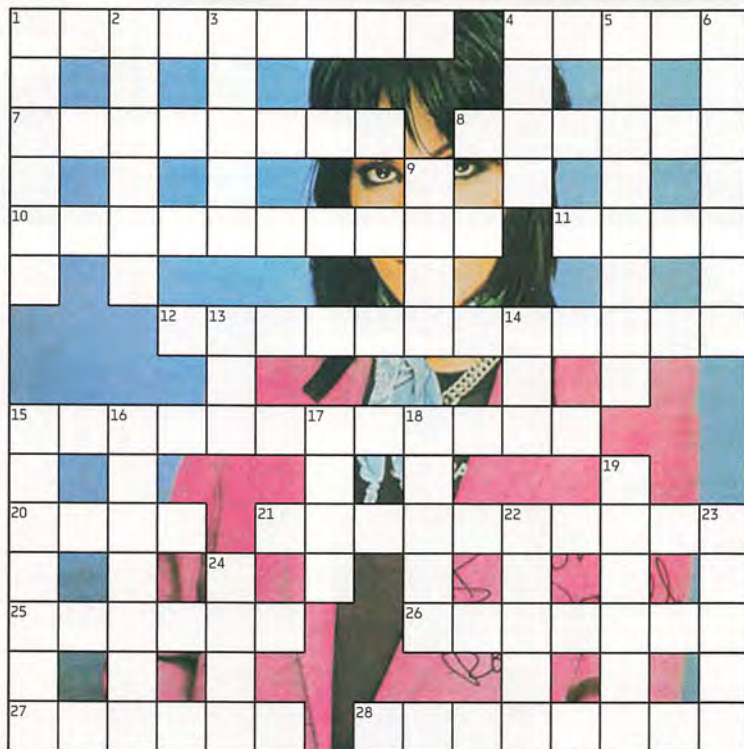
BY BRENDAN QUIGLEY

ACROSS

- 1 '00s pinup Jesse, or '60s pinup Paul
- 4 Colorful jam band Sister _____
- 7 Nu-metallers with the hit "Vermilion"
- 8 & 10 9 down's 2004 No. 1 hit with (literally) a click track (five words)
- 11 She loves rock & roll (so put another dime in the jukebox, baby)
- 12 2004 hit about an optimist
- 15 Scissor Sisters' suggestion of a hot night on the town (three words)
- 20 "_____ Guru" (Captain Beefheart)
- 21 Nu-metal act that did a collision-course mashup album with Jay-Z (two words)
- 25 Hendrix asked, "_____ Experienced?" (two words)
- 26 1976 Aerosmith slow-dance classic (two words)
- 27 Seasonal Patti Smith album
- 28 Atlanta rapper né Christopher Bridges

DOWN

- 1 De La Soul knows it's just me, _____ and I
- 2 C&W political button-pushers
- 3 Poison drummer _____ Rocket
- 4 Nine Inch Nails song covered by Johnny Cash
- 5 Houses of the Holy residents, for short
- 6 The Beatles' last movie (three words)
- 9 Rapper Snoop who announced his desire to coach the Steelers
- 13 Jamie's 2004 Oscar-nominated role
- 14 Audioslave's Morello
- 15 Rapper thrown out of 17 down
- 16 Las Vegas New Wave revival band with the hit 12 across
- 17 G-_____
- 18 One of the Beasties
- 19 Robert who was addicted to love in the '80s
- 22 "I _____ Girl" (Puff Daddy)
- 23 Southern royalty from Leon
- 24 "November Rain" singer



→ Send your completed puzzle to *Blender* Puzzle Contest, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, NY 10018



ROUND 2 MOBY VS. BLENDER

POP STARS aren't known as cerebral types, so *Blender* challenged the whole lot of 'em to a game of chess, hoping for an easy, ego-boosting victory. Each month, a different star will make a move, and we'll respond until we finally capture that crowny-looking doodad. Do your worst, Moby ...

MOBY'S MOVE

"THE KING'S PAWN ONE SPACE, TO FREE UP THE QUEEN AND BISHOP."

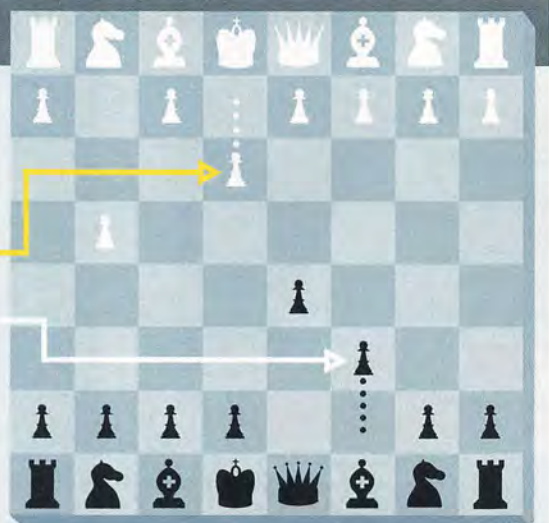
BLENDER'S MOVE

"THE QUEEN'S BISHOP'S PAWN ONE SPACE, TO PROTECT THE KING."

Former U.S. Chess Federation president **Don Schultz** says:

(ON MOBY) "Conservative move but not bad. Does the job of protecting the pawn."
(ON BLENDER) "Blender plays it right: Protect first, and then counterattack."

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BORN IN SCOTLAND 38 YEARS AGO, THIS GARBAGE SINGER IS KNOWN AS "FROG EYES" AND LOVES TO WATCH THE NBA AND USE THE "C" WORD. NONE OF WHICH ANSWERS THE QUESTION ...

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

WHO DOES SHIRLEY MANSON THINK SHE IS?

YOUR SELF-PORTRAIT SAYS "LE MEPRIS." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Le Mépris is a French movie by Jean-Luc Godard. I was watching it while I was drawing the picture. It means "contempt," which is such a fantastic word. My dad's always saying, "Why do you have to be so full of contempt for everything?"

AND WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

I think it's being a redhead. Having red hair is like having a tattoo—it's indelible. When you're really small you have this feeling that you're not the same as everybody else, and it carves out your personality.

ONE ODD THING ABOUT YOUR SELF-PORTRAIT—Yes, doctor?

THERE ARE SCARS ON YOUR THROAT AND ABOVE YOUR HEART.

I had vocal surgery just before making this record, which was a big ordeal. And I had a tumor cut in my breast, so I have this huge scar now, a real scar.

IS THE NEW GARBAGE RECORD ALSO FULL OF SCARS?

Every record is, for every artist. That's what songs are.

WHAT WAS YOUR NICKNAME IN SCHOOL?

Occasionally I was called "Frog Eyes" or "Bloodhound." I have these huge, bulging eyes. The nicknames were really cruel, and I found them utterly devastating. I don't know if I was ever well-adjusted, but I was an A student until I was about 14. Then I was bullied at school. When you're bullied, it remains a motivating factor for the rest of your life.

WHO WAS YOUR WORST BOYFRIEND?

He gave me V.D. I was 18 or 19, and he didn't tell me he'd given me V.D. Instead, he slipped a note from the health center, asking me to come in for a checkup, inside a Valentine's Day card. Really charming. And I never saw the note. Eventually I discovered I had V.D. because the symptoms became so appalling.

"I'M SO CHOCK-FULL OF PILLS."

I DON'T THINK HALLMARK HAS A CARD FOR THOSE OCCASIONS. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CURSE?

"Fucking cunt." American women seem horrified by my use of "cunt." When you use it in America, you have delivered a foul blow. Scots just think it's really funny.

WHAT MEDICATION ARE YOU ON?

I'm so chock-full of pills I literally couldn't even tell you how many I take. It's frightening. I have pills to fix everything.

ARE THEY WORKING?

You tell me.

JUDGING FROM THE NEW RECORD, NOT SO MUCH. WHAT KIND OF DRUNK ARE YOU?

A happy drunk. I used to be quite a heavy drinker, because everyone from Scotland is. The weather's so bad that we spend a lot of time indoors. It doesn't take much to get me drunk anymore.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE YOUR TASTE IN SEX? KINKY? VANILLA? LUSTY? BORED?

I'm all of the above.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE LEGAL DRUG?

The San Antonio Spurs. About four years ago I spotted Tim Duncan taking some free throws, and I became an insane basketball freak. I have NBA League Pass on my TiVo, and I spend revolting amounts of money on tickets. But I never want to meet Tim Duncan; I just want to idolize him from afar.

TALK US THROUGH YOUR WORST HAIRCUT.

In 2001, I dyed it blonde and shaved my head, but left one side of it longish. That was unattractive! I was in a deep depression, and it alleviated a lot of the stress, because I disappeared into being somebody else.

SO, SHIRLEY: WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Doctor, surely you can tell me. That's why I've come to you in the first place.

SORRY, BUT OUR SESSION IS UP.

I'll see you the same time next week, yeah? [BLENDER]

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(list brand)

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